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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. JOSEPH STIBBS CHRISTMAS.

By E. Eleazer LORD.

WITH

FAREWELL LETTER TO THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN SOCIETY OF MONTREAL,

AND

LETTER FROM THE REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D.

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MEMOIR.

THE subject of the following memorial, JOSEPH STIBBS CHRISTMAS, was born April 10th, 1803, in Georgetown, Beaver county, Pennsylvania. His parents had thirteen children, of whom he was the eighth. His father was descended from an ancient family of the north of England. Having passed the early part of his life in London, he removed to this country and settled in Pennsylvania, in 1784. His maternal grandfather, Joseph Stibbs, likewise from London, came to this country and settled in the then colony of Virginia, prior to the revolution.

From his earliest years the extraordinary versability and ardor of his mind were displayed both in his stuties and in his more active employments. He discovered a restless spirit of inquiry into every subject to which his attention was directed, and at the same time a taste for rural scenery, an inventive and imitative turn, and a remarkable fondness for drawing and painting. A communication from one of his relatives states that before he was eight years old he had a room appropriated to himself, where he practised drawing maps and painting, and that he became so devoted to the use of his pencil as to subject himself to severe privations, in order to indulge that propensity.

He continued to cherish this passion for painting till near the close of his terms at college; and at one period it engrossed nearly all his time and attention, and was designed to be the object of his future life. He accordingly studied and wrote much on this and its kindred arts. Several of his manuscripts on this subject are preserved, some treating it by way of analysis, others of criticism; some consisting of notes and observations on the history of painters and painting, and some defending the art, as a pursuit for life, against the objections of his friends and acquaintances. From these papers, and from some letters which were addressed to him, it appears that he continued to practice this art with increasing facility and very flattering success; and that he was encouraged to send one of his original pieces in oil to the exhibition at Philadelphia.

In addition to this, he gave himself at the same time to the kindred, and, to a genius and temperament like his, no less fascinating, art of poetry. Did his papers furnish nothing but what remains of his first sixteen years on this subject, they would suffice to show that he possessed those rare talents and qualities which fitted him to excel in whatever he undertook. He pursued with this the same method as with every other subject upon which he bestowed any considerable attention; he analyzed it, studied its history, principles, and relations, and then practised. Having once possessed himself of a subject in this manner, it seemed to occupy a fixed place in his mind, and to be ever ready to be used at pleasure.

As an illustration of the hold which poetry and painting had gained on him, and of his success in the cultivation of them, it may suffice to mention his "Poem in two cantos" entitled "THE ARTIST; prepared for the public contest be-

tween the Union and Literary Societies of Washington College," (of which he was then a member, and in his sixteenth year;) "and published by the Union Society in 1819." It was his object to vindicate the fine arts from the disparaging opinions then current as to their importance, and to awaken an interest in their favor. His analysis of this poem is subjoined,* from the above mentioned edition. Fragments of two other poems written at a later period, and a variety of smaller poetic compositions, remain among his papers.

His compositions and translations between his eighth and sixteenth year on the different subjects which his studies and employments brought within his view are very numerous, and for the most part such as might be appealed to in proof

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* "Canto I. opens with a view of the dark ages—inquires what first relieved mankind from the thraldom of superstition and ignorance—attributes this emancipation to the fine arts—mentions some of the modern poets of Italy—Dante—Tasso—Petrarch—artists, Michael Angelo—Buonarrotti described— Da Vince—an allusion to the battle of Pisa—Raphael, his character, fame, untimely death--Traits of Correggio, his penury, misfortune--Titian, his excellence, chiefly in coloring—Tintoret—Giorgione—Paul Veronese—characteristics of Salvator Rosa—the three Caracci, Hannibal, Agostino, Ludovico—their scholars, Guido and Dominichino—proceeds to the painters of France—Poussin—Le Brun —Le Seur—the sanguinary David—Flemish artists—Rubens, Vandyke, Rembrandt—Prussian, Eckstein—the English school, Reynolds, Fuseli, Wilson, Barry—mentions the sources whence the painters drew their knowledge of design and correctness of contour—the antique."

"Canto II. While the works of the learned are excluded from the view of the greater part of mankind by the veil of ignorance, the sublime conceptions of the artist are poured on every eye—

of the rapid progress of his mind, and the diligence and ardor with which he pursued his education. Among those of his manuscripts of that period which deserve particular notice, are the following: a translation of Lucian's twenty-third dialogue, under date 23d January, 1816 (his thirteenth year), which is done in an easy, flowing style, and written out in a fair hand.

A translation of part of Virgil's Pollio, and some translations from Greek authors.

A translation (in part) of the commentaries of Hirtius concerning the African war. This manuscript, of about forty pages, is very plainly written, and has a full title page as if intended for publication.

And of original compositions, beside some in Latin and

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enumerates the various incentives in Europe to excite the imagination, and create painters and poets—particularly the relics of antiquity and the places consecrated in the pages of history—how many advantages they possess when compared with those of America, especially the opportunity of studying the antique, and the assistance of such patrons as the Medici; yet America has produced abundant and superior talents for the fine arts—presents a view of West on his voyage to Rome—mentions the picture of Christ healing the sick—Stewart—anticipation that when Europe shall again be plunged in the night of barbarism, the arts may find refuge in America—Leslie—Allston—adverts to those cavillers who suppose that America possesses not genius—calls upon the departed great of America to deny the assertion—invokes the Americans to cherish the fine arts, to consider them as well their honor as the economy of the nation—allusion to Daniel's prophecy—mention of Trumbull—to those mortals who possess no taste—describes a genuine and amiable poet or artist—the progress of genius—the progress of a work of genius concludes with an apostrophe to the graphic muse."

Greek, there are—an extended "Analysis of Logic,"—a piece dated Nov. 1816, on the Immortality of the Soul,—and several essays on other subjects: also a Salutatory Address on the Fine Arts, delivered in September, 1819, when he graduated, in which he endeavored to model the successive paragraphs in such a manner as to exemplify the rules, and illustrate every part of rhetoric.

In the course of the year 1819 his attention was drawn to the subject of religion, and a total change in his views, affections and purposes took place. With relation to this very interesting period, a letter has been received from his brother-in-law, Rev. James Rowland, of Mansfields, Ohio, and likewise a letter from Rev. Andrew Wylie, D.D., then president of the college.

"In the summer of 1818," says Mr. R., "when at Washington College as professor of languages, I was informed by Mr. James Reek, professor of natural sciences, in a conversation respecting the prospect of students for the winter session, that Joseph S. Christmas was about to return, and he added, he is himself a host. I had before heard of the Christmas family of Georgetown, forty miles below Pittsburgh, but had no personal acquaintance with any member of it. At the commencement of the session young Christmas came. He seemed about fifteen years of age, and was very interesting. He had been in college under Dr. Brown, and this was to be his last year. In the winter he practised painting, and wrote for the spring contest his first printed composition, a poem on the subject of the Fine Arts called *The Artist*. At that time it was his in-

tention to repair to the Academy of Philadelphia immediately after leaving college. But in the course of the summer (1819) the death of two of his fellow students occurred, one of whom was his particular companion, and a great change took place in his views and purposes. In September he graduated; the first honors of the class were, without any hesitation, conferred on him by the Board.

"In February or March, 1819, I had my first conversation with him on religious subjects. I cannot now relate all that passed, but one thing I well remember his telling me, namely, that when a child, reflecting on his accountability to God, he thought he would beware, and not have to answer for any sin until he should be seven years of age. From college he returned home to Georgetown, and thence removed with the family to Wooster, Wayne county, Ohio. There, in compliance with the wishes of his father, he commenced the study of medicine. At the same time he was abridging Claude and writing sermons. There were many obstacles in the way of his entering on the study of theology, owing partly to the opinions and feelings of some of his near relatives, and partly to his pecuniary circumstances after the expenses of his classical education; and it was not until the spring of 1821 that these difficulties were entirely removed."

Rev. Dr. Wylie, after referring to the circumstances of his first acquaintance with Mr. Christmas, at Washington College, says, "He soon attracted my particular attention, and, indeed, it was hardly possible not to feel an interest in him at the first view. The soft tones of his voice, the regularity of his features, the peculiarly mild expression of his countenance, joined to the infantine simplicity of his whole manner, led me to expect something delicate but not

strong in the character of his mind. I was soon induced to change, in some degree, the opinion of his intellectual character, which the impression made by his personal appearance had led me to form. He soon rose to a high standing in his class, though painting, of which at that time he was excessively fond, drew off much of his attention from his regular studies. On this subject I often expostulated with him in private, but in vain. I found he had, as most young people of a lively fancy are apt to do, sketched out a plan of life for himself, in which the determination to go to Italy for the purpose of gratifying and improving his taste for painting, held a prominent place. The indulgence of such thoughts was likely to prove injurious to him, and he was exhorted to lay them aside. His emphatic reply was, 'As soon might a tender mother abandon her nursing child.' I said no more to him on the subject. During the last year, however, he did abandon such thoughts; for his mind had become deeply engaged in something which he felt to be vastly more important—religion.

"The evidences of Christianity which were presented to the class in the course of a few lectures in an imperfect, but simple and affectionate manner, as a subject on which they ought to come without delay to some practical determination, furnished the occasion of his seriousness, and his change of views as to the whole business of life. I do not know whether he communicated anything on the state of his mind while undergoing this change to any one except myself, and to me not much, or frequently. He was naturally modest and reserved, and was counselled, on the subject which he then felt to be a matter of deep personal concern, neither to seek nor to depend much on the directions of men, but to go to God by prayer and daily consultation of

His holy word. In this I have reason to believe he was much engaged. He did not, at any time during the progress of his early experience, seem to be under the influence of strong terrors; but was deeply and awfully impressed with a sense of the *importance of religion*. And when he obtained satisfactory discoveries of the way of salvation as made known in the gospel, he seemed to be brought in a manner suited to the native gentleness of his character, to the state of mind which Peter expressed when he said, "Lord, to whom should we go but unto thee, thou hast the words of eternal life." At the same time, with the heartfelt satisfaction which he experienced in trusting his own soul to the hands of Jesus, arose a strong desire to point him out to others as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Under the influence of this desire he sought an introduction into the office of the Christian ministry, and though difficulties were presented, Providence at length cleared up the way."

After he had relinquished the study of medicine and determined to prepare for the duties of the sacred office, in a letter to a friend from whom he solicited some assistance, having mentioned the struggle he had had in relation to this change of pursuits, he says, "I might with propriety say with Jeremiah, that the word of the Lord was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

It was not long after this period that he applied for admission, and was received into the Presbyterian Church in Wooster. Through one of his relatives the narrative of his religious experience, which he drew up and presented on that occasion, has been received, from the Rev. Thomas Barr, pastor of that church, who on inclosing it writes as

follows: "Dear sir, understanding that some sketches of the life of your late endeared and most estimable relative, Rev. J. S. Christmas, are about to be published, as it may be a valuable acquisition to the writer of his memoirs, I inclose the written exhibition by his own hand, which he laid before the session of Wooster church, at the time he was cordially received to membership. He was received the next sabbath, I think, after the date of his narrative. I had intended to preserve for my own use this now precious relic of his memory; but under existing circumstances should feel guilty in withholding it."

The following is a copy of this narrative. The writer was now a little over eighteen years of age.

"WOOSTER, SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1821.

"*To the Session of the Church.*

"In narrating the dealings of God with my soul, I have first to state that the kingdom of heaven came not with observation; that it has always been a subject of regret that the exercises of my mind were not more distinctly marked like those of many Christians who have had well defined seasons of conviction, succeeded by a state of life and joy. But though I cannot ascertain the precise time of my regeneration, yet many particulars relating to my conversion or turning to God, can be recollected. About twenty months since I was actuated, I know of no exciting cause in particular, partly by the powerful preaching, and partly by the reading of the word and some providences of God, to some concern with regard to my immortal interests; but I know of no extraordinary exercise of mine then, of no very fearful apprehensions of the wrath to come, or sudden manifestation of the glory of God in the face of

Jesus Christ. But I was about this time convinced of many preparatory truths of which I was before ignorant; such as, 'by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified —that the carnal heart is enmity against God, that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—that they who are in the flesh cannot please God—that we must be born again—that we are all by nature concluded under the curse of the law—that Christ has assumed the curse of the law in our stead, and opened up a new and living way by which we may have access to the Father.' I now began the duty of prayer, and to examine the evidences of sanctification, and gradually to hope concerning my good estate. Looking back upon this period, though I see many things plainly now, which were obscure then, and have been taught some things since which I knew not then, and though there were very many imperfections in my walk, yet I think I can discover some of the feeble beginnings of grace. In this state I continued some months, without any sensible progress, and then, alas! every thing like religion suffered a gradual and total declension. This arose from too familiar an intercourse with the world, the want of Christian fellowship, and the neglect of the means of grace. When I say it *arose* from intercourse with the world, &c., I mean that these excited the unsubdued carnality of my heart. When I strayed from God, however, he graciously hedged up my way. And I give this my testimony that such declension has pangs under which its subjects smart. At this time I lost the form of godliness; and though my mind was disturbed with the continual recurrence of remorse, yet I could sometimes sit altogether indifferent and unmoved under the preaching of the word. I shall pass over this gloomy season of darkness

which lasted about eight months, without narrating my various convictions of having committed the unpardonable sin; of my many wishes to be restored to that state of reconciliation and tranquillity which I enjoyed when the candle of the Lord shone upon my head. I then thought that all my former experience of the Lord's goodness was a delusion; but since I have been recovered I think differently. There are not wanting instances of the believer's long and grievous defection; nor can I see any thing inconsistent with the reign of grace, for God to permit the believer to fall into such defection, since it teaches him more complete reliance on God's power to preserve him from falling, and his need of greater watchfulness in future to make his calling and election sure, to add to his faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, &c. The way was now open for my restoration, and Christian conversation was preparing me; but that which I think first led to repentance, and to seek reconciliation carefully with tears, was a sermon preached by Mr. T. E. Hughes: and from that time to this I hope I have been growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and observing my interest in his righteousness and mediation become more and more clear. One lesson in particular I have been taught of late, to live by faith and not by sense. Before this, whenever engaged in communion with God, if I felt a want of life and of the spirit of devotion, and enjoyed not the special presence of God, I was instantly ready to question my lot and part with his people, and to doubt his love; and though such occasions now grieve, I feel more assured that though he leave me for a short time, yet with great mercies he will gather me. My views of sin are far different from what they once were, and what most opened my eyes to its enor-

mity, was the vicarious sufferings for it which God inflicted on his Son on the cross. I have diligently and prayerfully examined myself by all the traits of the Christian character, and besought God if there were any hidden evil in my heart, that he would show it me; and after all, I am led to conclude favorably of my estate, and to believe that God has renewed my heart, pardoned my sins, given me the spirit of adoption, and bestowed joy and peace in believing for Christ's sake. But still I find a law that 'when I would do good, evil is present with me: for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind; and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' While I seek the privilege of communion with the saints, I feel that I am the least of all saints; yet because Christ has shown me mercy, I desire that his people may be my people, and their God my God. From this very brief and imperfect and, I think, sincere statement of the dealings of God with me, I hope that the Session may feel disposed to extend to me the privilege of communion; and may God superintend their deliberations and direct their decision.

JOSEPH S. CHRISTMAS."

He now almost immediately proceeded to Princeton, and became a member of the theological seminary. There remain among his papers two printed numbers of an Essay on Public Preaching, which were written by him, and published at Wooster, in the "Ohio Spectator," under the signature of Juvenis, in December, 1819; that is, shortly

after he left college. The following are extracts from the first number, which treats of the importance, necessity, and difficulty of public preaching. After speaking of the necessity of a divine revelation for the instruction and guidance of mankind, he says, "We should be inclined to think that a revelation so important and necessary, a revelation from God, would be eagerly desired and embraced. But our experience is vastly the reverse. This very revelation tells us that we 'love darkness rather than light.' God was well aware of this surprising fact. He has taken the most effectual means to counteract the perversity. He has multiplied preachers in every age, from Enoch the preacher of righteousness, to his gospel ministers at this day; has never suffered an intermission in this extensive plan; has added miracles to strike; has given line upon line, and precept upon precept; has prescribed ordinances and ceremonies; has set apart times for the special consideration of his truths and the worship of himself; and above all, has added to these means the effusions of his Holy Spirit. One solitary, though it were a complete declaration of truth, is not sufficient to produce any impression or permanent good on our obstinate minds. Commands must be repeated, crimes forbidden, duty enforced, motives presented, the memory refreshed, the understanding enlightened, the heart affected, again and again; and after all this, how often has the preacher of righteousness been forced to exclaim with the prophet, 'I have stretched out my hand all day long to a disobedient and gain-saying people?' If such efforts are more than once unsuccessful, what consequences would ensue were they totally relaxed?" ——"But the exhibition even of truths, however interesting in themselves, if shown always in the same light, will

disgust. They must be seen in the best light: pleasure must be mixed with instruction. We must captivate the imagination to reach the understanding, the intellect must be enlightened to reach the heart, and we must avail ourselves of the ardor of the feelings to induce the will. It is not easy to make the vice we love appear as our most deadly enemy. It is no mean art to make a virtue, to which we are indifferent, appear lovely and interesting. It is not every illiterate speaker that can solve difficulties, explain mysteries, banish doubts, influence the zeal, and animate the progress of the Christian. A view of the abuses of the pulpit, and a desire to prompt the industry, and encourage all who ascend it to persevere in the study of perfect oratory and a complete knowledge of theology, induces me to commence these essays. At the same time, I would wish them to understand in how difficult and arduous a situation they are placed."

Soon after he came to reside at Princeton, he commenced a private journal, which, however, was continued but a short time, owing, as may be inferred from several notices in it, to an enfeebled state of health, which a too eager and exclusive exertion of mind already began to induce, and from which, it is probable, he was never afterwards entirely free. From this journal the following brief extracts are made:

"*August* 9, 1821.—In the afternoon, I spent an hour in the library, examining the ever-to-be-revered Whitfield's manuscript journal. It records his daily labors for about two years. How did my heart burn within me as I read

of his incessant labors, in season and out of season—his holy aspirations and devout meditations! Oh that a large portion of his spirit might rest upon me, and that unction from on high which spread such a savor of life unto life all around him."

"*August* 10.—In two days I am for the second time to unite with the people of God in commemorating my Saviour's dying love."

Then follows a very long prayer, carefully written out, including a kind of covenant, at the close of which he says:—"Spent the forenoon in writing the foregoing, after which walked out on the road, and had sweet meditations on the love of God. Towards evening, went into the woods, to my accustomed resort, and read over the preceding pages several times."

"*Saturday, August* 11.—Fasted this day, and was much in prayer and self-examination.

"*Lord's day, August* 12.—Spent the morning in prayer and in reading the scriptures. At church, the exercises produced in me, and I doubt not in most of the children of God, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. May the strength of Christ be perfected in my weakness in fulfilling more perfectly than I have ever yet done the vows of God which are upon me."

"*August* 13.—Wrote a letter to ——, earnestly exhorting him to flee from the wrath to come. The Lord, who can accomplish much by the feeblest means, can bless these few lines which I have sent to the eternal salvation of him for whom I have so often prayed and interceded. I find that cultivating the gift prepares us better for entering into the spirit of prayer, and that a clear and methodical arrangement of the topics we are to dwell on before God is

serviceable. The duty of thanksgiving (which approaches nearer to the employment of heaven than any other of our religious exercises, adoration perhaps excepted) shall occupy my thoughts, my pen, and I hope, my heart, for the few following pages."

Here follows an exercise of praise, thanksgiving, and prayer, chiefly in scripture language, which is extended through eight closely written pages, and embraces a wide range of subjects.

The remainder of this diary contains little more than a brief notice of his studies and of some passing events; and it is to be regretted that no other journal of this kind, till near the close of his life, is to be found among his papers. The most striking feature of this journal is the evidence it affords of his love and habit of prayer. It contains several forms of considerable length, besides frequent short petitions, and a number of plans or skeletons of prayer, under a variety of heads. It would seem, that instead of writing much about himself, when he sat down to this book, he passed the time in devout exercises of prayer and praise. Among the books which he read, are noted the memoirs of White, Spencer, Martyn, Brainerd, Fuller, and Scougal.

Saturday, September 8, he writes:—"At the close of another week, on looking back I see much to be humbled for; a formality in public and social prayer, which I think is a temptation of Satan, and that I need to put on the whole armor of God. I must likewise blame myself for too much neglecting the holy word, for the deficiency of ejaculatory prayer, for want of diligence and order in business."

He was about this time much taken up with the memoirs of H. K. White, and under date September 10, 1821,

says, "Copied in India ink a likeness of K. White, which I framed in glass, and hung up on the wall just over my table, that my eyes may stir me up to imitate so noble a pattern."

"*September* 13.—Employed the greater part of the day in copying off some drawings of Hindoo deities, sent to the Society of Inquiry concerning Missions, by Gordon Hall, missionary at Bombay. These paintings I made for a missionary agent, hoping that in his hands they might subserve the cause of our Master. Read in H. Martyn's Memoirs. The question recurred to me, and caused a violent struggle in my mind: "Would I be willing, for Christ's sake, to leave father, mother, sister, brother, wife, houses, and lands, and go to a distant country to preach the gospel to the heathen?" This question took fast hold of his feelings, and was not shunned or dismissed till he had views of the missionary cause which gained his heart, and rendered him willing to go wherever duty might call.

"*September* 14.—Neglected this day setting a watch over my first thoughts, and endeavoring to make them humble and devout; so excellent a preparation for prayer and a right spirit during the day. Thought much of a missionary life."

"*October* 1.—Spent the forenoon in reading Brainerd and Doddridge. These holy books excited a fervor in my soul which remained all day. In the evening, went to the woods, and felt strongly drawn forth to God for more holiness, and for blessings on my friends for whom I interceded."

He continued in the seminary the usual period of three years, faithfully and zealously pursued the regular routine

of studies, exerted himself to be useful as a Sunday School teacher and in various other ways, and was esteemed and beloved by all who knew him.

During this period, his original compositions, sermons, essays, comments, and notes, on various theological and practical subjects, and his copies of the principal lectures of the professors in the seminary, are very abundant, and testify the ceaseless activity of his mind, and the diligence and ardor with which he employed himself. It is not intended to present a particular enumeration of those papers. A few of the subjects of them, however, are worthy to be specially noticed.

He early commenced an "Analysis" of the subject of prayer, which he copied and enlarged from time to time, till it was extended to about sixty manuscript pages. This was evidently a favorite subject of study and meditation with him. He revised it frequently, adding new topics of acknowledgment and petition, new forms of expression and quotations from Scripture, sometimes in pencil and at others in ink. In one essay of this kind there are more than one hundred and fifty heads and divisions, many of which are written out at considerable length, chiefly in Scripture language. There are, moreover, besides those already mentioned, a number of forms of prayer, chiefly for public worship, fully written out, some of which, he observes, he committed to memory.

It may well be supposed to have been owing in no small degree, to his having so faithfully studied this subject and enriched his mind with it, that he excelled so remarkably as he did in public prayer. Highly interesting as his public ministrations were wont to be, generally, no portion of them was more edifying and impressive, or

gained more upon the attention of the hearers, than his prayers. They were characterized not only by variety, copiousness, and fervency, but by a happy method and arrangement, an appropriateness and ease, a singular felicity of expression, a dignity, propriety and reverence which could hardly fail to be observed by every one. This was evidently a most agreeable exercise to him; and being performed with all the natural ease and sweetness of his voice and manner, it won the attention and sympathy of the hearer, and seemed to abstract him from the world, and carry him with the speaker up to the throne of grace.

It does not seem to be too much to say that prayer was the chief, the leading, and most constant subject of his thoughts and practice, during the latter years of his life. Whether a judgment be formed from his writings, from 1819 down to 1830, or from a personal knowledge of his sentiments and habits, the same conclusion will be arrived at. Prayer was his chief, his daily, hourly, constant resource. He delighted in it, and derived unspeakable relief, comfort and spiritual aid from it. Amidst his own sufferings and anxieties from ill-health, and the overwhelming tide of afflictions which beset him on every side as he drew near the end of his course, prayer was all in all to him, as a means of relief and support. Happily for him, in seasons of debility and pain, alike preventing mental and bodily exertion, his mind had been so thoroughly trained and disciplined to this exercise, and so richly stored with the examples and inculcations of the Scriptures.

Besides a number of plans and sketches of lectures or other exercises on this subject, there are among his papers several sermons on prayer; particularly one entitled

"Christian Intercession," from Romans, i. 9; another on the Lord's Prayer; another on "Family Prayer," from Joshua, 24; another on "Ejaculatory Prayer," Nehemiah, ii. 4; another on the "Prayer of Faith," 1 John, v. 14.

The first of these is numbered four in the series of his discourses, and was written at Princeton in 1825. On that account partly, and because it advantageously exhibits his views at that period of the duty of interceding for others, the principal part of it is inserted at a subsequent page. The reader's attention might here be solicited, not only to the important truths which he inculcates, but to the ease and propriety of his style, the evidence furnished at every step of his familiar acquaintance with his subject, and the many striking and impressive illustrations and turns of thought with which his compositions abound. But it can hardly be necessary, even to the most cursory reader, to be premonished of these things, nor is it apprehended that any one will require an apology for presenting him with these quotations.

There is connected with one of his discourses on a sacramental occasion, (1st,) an "Invocation," at the commencement of the service, (2nd,) "Prayer before Sermon," in which, at intervals, the several verses, (except the 14th,) of the 51st Psalm are successively introduced, with some slight verbal accommodations, (3rd,) a "Consecrating Prayer," introductory to the ordinance, (4th,) "Thanksgiving and Prayer," at the close of the service.

This may be regarded as a sample of the pains and care he took in preparing for his public duties, and especially for the duty of prayer, which, of all the public exercises of religion, is often the worst performed, and least regarded, and, it may be presumed, is too seldom anticipated by any

preparatory study or reflection. It would seem that upon almost all special occasions, he was in the habit not only of meditating before hand, but of writing out his prayers, and thus preparing his own mind to perform the service publicly, in the best manner he was capable of, and to enjoy the highest satisfaction and delight in the exercise. It was probably owing to this habit, that his public prayers had so strikingly the character of prayers in the closet; that they indicated on his part a consciousness only of the presence of God; and that they abounded with the simplicity, fervency, and reverence of a filial spirit.

As a futher illustration of this subject, it is in point to mention the occasion of his return to his congregation, after a journey which he took in the spring of 1825, for the purpose of obtaining pecuinary aid towards erecting their place of worship. On this occasion he wrote a prayer preparatory to his first meeting them for public worship, of which the annexed extract is a part. After expressions of adoration and praise to God for the wonders of his love, as displayed in his works, and in his word, and ordinances, and of invocation of his gracious presence and aid, he proceeds: "We bless thee, Father of Mercies, that we are again, as a people, permitted to meet together. We here erect a monument of our gratitude, a pillar of remembrance to thy providential goodness. Thou hast been with him who is the mouth of this people in prayer; thou hast directed his goings; under the covert of thy wings he has found refuge; in various perils during his long journeyings, thou hast protected him; in multiplied labors thou hast upheld him; the brazen-leaved gates of difficulty hast thou opened before him; thou hast prospered him in awakening the liberality of the churches beyond our ex-

peetation ; and now in peace and safety he is permitted to resume his usual duties. We thank thee too that the lives of those now present have been spared to this time,—that they are still prisoners of hope, and may all yet become partakers of thy grace :—and yet thou hast sent thine awful messenger amongst us,—there is one who was with us when we last assembled, who is now not here,—he was suddenly called hence,—he is in the world of spirits. Enable us, O God, to learn and improve by such lessons of mortality. Some of us before thee are mourners,—some have been called upon to part with dear children,—thou knowest the severity of such a stroke,—clouds and darkness are round about thee, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy throne,—thou hast bruised, and thou canst bind up,—thou hast wounded, and thou canst pour in the oil of consolation,—thou hast afflicted, and thou canst sanctify afflictions,—thou hast taken away tender offspring, but thou canst give a Saviour—a title to heaven,—thou hast caused a sorrowful parting, but thou cans't give a joyful meeting where they shall never part again,—where parents and children join together in praise to Him, who, having brought them through much tribulation, made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and consecrated them as kings and priests unto God."

" There are others whose state of health, or the duties of life, have called to another place of abode. Be with them, O Lord, and bless them—be very gracious to them —and may the good will of him that dwelt in the burning bush be their portion. We ask not that thou shouldst take them from the world, but that thou wouldst keep them from the evil that is in the world,—that thou wouldst

preserve them as the apple of thine eye, and keep them by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation."

"We render thanks to thee the giver of every good and perfect gift, for the benevolence of those in a distant region who having heard that our little ark dwelt under curtains while they lived in ceiled houses, have liberally imparted of their substance, in commiseration of our necessities. We bless thee for what our eyes have seen,—for instances of the riches of liberality abounding out of the depths of poverty, which will at the day when the secrets and motives of all hearts shall be made manifest, be to the glory and honor of our benefactors."

"O Lord God! we implore thy blessing on this church and congregation. We trust that it is a vine of thine own planting. Suffer it not to be laid waste—let it send forth its boughs like the cedars of Lebanon—let it bear fruit like the grapes of Eschol—let the dews of Hermon descend upon it. Thou art visiting the earth with showers of reviving grace. Let us not be like the fleece of Gideon which was dry while all around was watered. Without thee we can do nothing. Breath of the Lord! come and breathe on the dry bones: arm of the Lord! awake! awake! quicken the hearts of thy people—animate their declining graces—stir them up to persevering intercession—may there be among us many wrestling Jacobs, many prevailing Israels, who will not let thee go except thou bless them," &c.

As has been suggested above, to excel in public prayer is by no means common. How seldom, indeed, is this service performed in such a manner as to fix the attention and impress the mind of the hearer? How often, on the

contrary, do prayers exhibit almost every species of fault, in regard to the general spirit and manner, the topics introduced, the careless, affected, drawling or hurried pronunciation, the frequent repetition and perhaps irreverent use of the sacred names, the introduction of unusual and inappropriate words, and of highly figurative language and allusions, of long and involved periods, of didactic and controvertial matter, of labored description, hyperbole and metaphor? How often, instead of a calm and collected state of mind, do we witness haste, effort and irreverence; and instead of what would be appropriate, a surprising crudeness and flippancy in matter and manner, which would not be tolerated in a sermon, and would be very ill thought of in a closet?

Another subject which, while in Princeton, he appears to have studied with great care and fidelity, and with great benefit to his own mind, and to his after usefulness, was the character, vicarious sufferings, and meditorial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. This subject interested him too deeply to be passed without a thorough investigation, and the attainment of clear, scriptural, and satisfactory views and convictions. His studies and meditations on it, of which, besides one considerable essay, there are among the papers of this period a variety of notices, appear to have prepared him to give this great theme its due prominence in his subsequent writings and ministrations. There are among his sermons no less than twelve on different parts of the character and work of Christ.

Passing other leading subjects of inquiry which specially engaged his attention in the course of his theological studies, it remains to mention one of a different nature, which deeply interested him before the close of his resi-

dence at Princeton; viz., the state of the Protestant churches in France and the valleys of Piedmonte, the facilities of usefulness to them, and his desire if possible to devote himself to their service. His mind was fully made up to the labors and privations of a missionary life, and in his inquiries into the condition of the several nations of the earth, and the means of access and usefulness to them, his own reflections appear to have led him to select the above-mentioned for the scene of his labors as a preacher of the gospel. One of his letters on this subject, addressed to S. V. S. Wilder, Esq., then recently from France, and dated March 21, 1824, very fully exhibits his views and the state of his feelings.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON, N. J.,
March 21, 1824.

"Sir,—A few weeks since I visited the city of New York, carrying with me a letter of introduction from Dr. Miller addressed to yourself. Your absence from the city deprived me of the opportunity of a personal interview with you. Upon my return to this place I took the liberty of writing you a letter, presuming that your kindness and the nature of my inquiries would form a sufficient apology for the trouble which a stranger was giving you. Not having heard from you, and supposing that you have not received my former letter, I shall here repeat the substance of what it contained.

"For several months there has been revolving in my mind a strong desire of devoting myself to the service of the reformed churches of France. The once flourishing condition of that formerly most fair portion of the Christian church, the havoc produced in it by the persecutions of Lewis XIV., its subsequent declensions, and late hope-

ful symptoms of recovery, give it an interest in the view of every Christian who surveys the various nations of the earth. An especial interest should *he* take in it, who is just coming forward to lend his exertions to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and who yet, disengaged from all restraining connexions, should try to consider himself a citizen of the world, and therefore as much bound to hear the claims of one country as another. When with such feelings I further consider the vast importance of regaining those territories which have been lost since the reformation, especially a country so rich in population, resources, and influence, as France; and when the practicability of doing it is rendered more probable by the religious toleration enjoyed there, the present state of *indifference* which appears in the Roman Catholic communion, and the increasing willingness to hear gospel truth which is found among the Protestant population. All these facts make me unwilling to dismiss the thoughts of France for the, in some respects, more pleasing prospects of staying at home. But I should be unfit to stay at home if, enchained by its ties, I was appalled at, and retreated from the hardships I might expect abroad. In attempting to obtain the information necessary to come to a proper decision on the course to be pursued, I have met with much embarrassment. Intelligence respecting the religious condition of France, the access which a foreigner might obtain to the attention of the people, in short, every thing I would wish to know I have found very scarce. Lately I have seen a number of the publications of the Continental Society; extracts of correspondence and reports down to 1822. The result of the whole is an increased desire to proceed in the undertaking. But how shall I be introduced into the country

and supported there? The Continental Society employs none but native preachers. The sums already expended on my education, and the equal claims of a large family, leave me nothing to expect, at least at present, from my father. Would you advise me to attempt in New-York or Philadelphia, where I am best known, a private association of wealthy and spirited individuals, who would agree to support one or two agents, or does our distance from France render impracticable the organization of a society like the Continental? Your advice in the whole business will of course depend upon some knowledge of the individual advised. Permit me then to say a few things concerning myself: circumstances will I hope excuse the apparent want of delicacy in doing so. My parents reside in the state of Ohio, I have completed the course of collegiate study, have been a member of the Theological Seminary in this place for nearly three years, and expect to be licensed by the presbytery of Philadelphia in a few weeks. I have not yet finished my twenty-first year. My youth, though disadvantageous in some respects, will enable me more easily to transform myself into a Frenchman in manners and speech. The most discouraging item is yet to come. I have very little knowledge of the French language. But having a somewhat good memory, I expect no insuperable difficulty on this score, provided my organs of speech are sufficiently flexible to adjust themselves to all the niceties of French pronunciation. If it were possible to get the charge of an English church in some part of France for two or three years, I might in the interim be acquiring the language, and whatever else I should find necessary; and at the end of this time, I should expect to dissolve all local engagements and pastoral connexions, and going forth as

an itinerant, to sow the seed of the gospel by the wayside, or within inclosures, wherever there was soil to receive it; visiting the languishing and destitute churches; seeking out the remnants of Huguenot Societies, which I dare say are still existing in many parts of the country, especially the mountainous districts of the south-east. Circumstances might determine me to use the subsidiary means of distributing tracts, forming associations, translating or composing religious books, &c. An undertaking of this kind, I deliberately expect will involve much self-denial and hardship; but in this way I should delight to spend my life. As yet I have taken no step and made no arrangements for such a mission. I venture to lay open my feelings and solicit the advice of one whose knowledge of that country and its religious concerns, best enables him to give advice, and whose attachment to a cause all Christians love, will I doubt not, dispose him do it. Among other inquiries, had I better be ordained in this country, or going merely as a licentiate, enter the ministry there, and thus secure the confidence and interest of the native pastors? Do the laws require all candidates for the ministry to go to the seminary at Montaubon? Will it be necessary to be naturalized? These queries, with whatever else you may think important, will you be so good as to answer? It is not improbable that immediately after my licensure (which will take place about the 20th of April,) I shall visit New England, and then I hope to have the gratification of seeing you face to face. I must not forget to mention that a classmate of mine, Mr. Benedict, a young man of piety, fortitude and decision, of good talents and popular eloquence, has recently been very seriously thinking of associating himself with me, in my projected undertaking. About the first of June

I design to return to Ohio to visit my friends, from whom I have been these three years absent. Before that time I wish to have my mind decided on this subject. Your letter and advice I expect will have the principal weight in that decision. Though personally a stranger to you, yet allow me to subscribe myself yours in Christian affection,

JOSEPH STIBBS CHRISTMAS."

To the above letter, it would be almost inexcusable not to add the following brief sketch of the state of religion in France, and the principal events respecting the Christian profession, from the reformation down to a recent period, in connection with the facilities and encouragements for such a missionary enterprise in that country, as he had in view. It was written by him a few weeks before the letter, and was designed for a periodical publication.

These papers show the cast of the author's mind, and the character of his piety. The reader will perceive that his zeal, though adequate to any undertaking of Christian labor and self-denial, travelled no faster than his knowledge; that he took all due pains to acquire the information requisite to satisfy his judgment and conscience; and that he did not communicate his project to others for their co-operation, till he had carefully surveyed the ground, and availed himself of every means of light within his reach. It will appear afterwards how, in the absence of any near prospect of being enabled to fulfill this favorite plan, he yielded to what appeared a very clear intimation of the will of Providence, and went another way. His views and feelings, however, raised an interest in the welfare of the Protestant churches of France, which has been increased, especially by the events of the last year, and which, it is hoped, will soon lead to something like a fulfillment of his design.

" It is to be regretted that, in the unexampled diffusion of religious intelligence which has taken place within a few years, so little is said concerning some of the most important portions of the world. What we receive from Europe is so purely English, that we never obtain more than a sidelong glance of the continent. This is easily accounted for, when we remember the hostile attitude in which the British government has until recently stood with respect to the neighboring kingdoms. The noise of warfare and battles having ceased, we begin to hear the milder accents of Christian solicitude, and witness the nobler feats of Christian exertion. It is my intention in this paper to make a few remarks on the present condition of *France*. And surely, in whatever point of light it is viewed, we could not be summoned to a more worthy theme for contemplation. Melancholy as the survey is, it was not always so. For a hundred years after the reformation, France was the garden-spot of the church, the fairest portion of Protestant christendom. The influence of the Queen of Navarre, and the apostolical labors of Calvin, Beza, Farrel, Viret, and others, early obtained for the reformed doctrines a most extensive diffusion in that kingdom. The churches had each a plurality of pastors, were Calvinistic in their doctrines, and Presbyterian in their form of government. The innumerable vexations to which they were exposed from Popish intolerance, were removed about the close of the sixteenth century, by the famous edict of Nantz, issued by Henry IV. The days which followed were too prosperous for the welfare of the Huguenots themselves, (for so the French Christians were termed) and for the tranquil observation of their Popish countrymen. The siege of Rochelle, in 1628, was the first signal for the violation of solemn treaty; the mas-

sacre, on St. Bartholemew's day, in 1671, was the next instance of sanguinary discipline inflicted by the *holy mother*; but the last scene of the tragedy was reserved for the revocation of the edict, in 1685. This violation of every bond, human and divine, of every obligation of clemency and justice, was effected at the instigation of Richelieu, prime minister of Louis XIV. The day after this nefarious breach of public faith, an order was issued, requiring all who would not embrace the Romish communion to depart the kingdom instantly. Multitudes, to the amount of about eight hundred thousand, gathering up what fragments of their wealth they could, fled from their country, and carried the arts, morals, and choicest population of France, into Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England, and North America, in which countries they found an asylum from oppression. The Papists were not yet satisfied. The last order was immediately followed by another, forbidding them to quit the country. Many of the refugees were arrested in the highways and seaports. Regiments of soldiers were quartered in their houses, to *dragoon* them into the faith. Their churches were shut, their pastors murdered, their females violated, and their houses burned. Many were the families who took refuge in the fastnesses of the mountains; but many more were they whose bones lay burnt under the smoking ruins of their dwellings. This is no exaggeration, unless the ingenious cruelty of demons can be exaggerated. The report of these transactions, which should have melted the heart of barbarism itself, was received at Rome with the most public demonstrations of joy and thanksgiving. After such thorough work, where are we to look for the Protestant church of France? A remnant of oppressed people still

remained after the fury of the persecution was over. They could say, as they met in their place of worship, "Here Abaddie once taught"—"So many years ago Claude, or Daille, or Pictet, or Saurin, preached here." But alas those prophets were gone! and the residue of their spirit rested not on their followers. The stupor of the shock they had received continued for more than a century. Infidelity had, with an unseen hand, taken away the key-stone which upheld the arch of empire. The storm of the French revolution came. Its violence alike laid prostrate the magnificent Romish cathedral and the humbler edifice of the Protestant church. That troublous season passed by; and Bonaparte, with a liberality which reflects honor on his political sagacity, granted the fullest toleration to all parties. But the unceasing warlike operations of his reign generated a military spirit, which exterminated every other passion. The only education among the youth was military; and war, as a matter of course, became the profession of every young man. The tactics of this world displaced all relish for the discipline necessary for the next. Upon the restoration of the Bourbon family, all attention to religion had so disappeared, even among the Roman Catholics, that it was judged expedient to send forth a host of missionaries who should beat up recruits to the standard of the Pope. But among the majority of the people, the priest was despised, as the wretch of hypocrisy, and the missionary as the agent of imposture. After all that had been done, it is no unusual thing to enter a splendid chapel, and find not more than a score of persons attending mass.

"The reformed have legal toleration under the Bourbon dynasty, but it is accompanied with many unjust restric-

tions. No foreigner, for instance, can become a pastor in their churches, and none of their preachers are allowed to address more than nineteen persons, unless it is in a church or a licensed house. It is but a few years since many of the Protestants were massacred at Nismes. Of a population of about thirty millions, two or three millions may be ranked among Protestants, who form five hundred and seventy congregations. Let a few facts guide us in an estimation of their religious character. The Lord's day, the strict observance of which forms such an unfailing criterion of Christian feeling, is in scarce any part of France, or even the whole continent of Europe, kept with what we should term decent respect. Twenty theatres, every Sabbath evening, throw open their doors to receive the giddy population of Paris, who are accounted very religious if they have attended a single service in the forenoon. In this Maelstrom of dissipation may the Protestant as well as the Romanist be seen circling. A few years since a couple of clergymen quarreled: a challenge was passed, and accepted: they met and fought: neither was killed; and each continued to carry

'Weekly to church his book of wicked prayers,'

without giving any offence to the public sense of decorum. These facts sufficiently indicate a laxity of morals, while the appearances of a corruption of doctrine are still more alarming. The creeping pestilence, which is rightly termed neology, has been moving among the clergy; and, like the simoom of the desert, wherever breathed, instant putrefaction takes place through the whole system. By this is meant a cold, heartless, God-denying heterodoxy, which is nothing better than 'baptized infidelity.' Its chief seat

is in the German universities, and from them it is gradually extending its influence, and many there are in Switzerland and France who have drunk in the poison at those fountains. If these things be so, the Gallican churches must be in a deplorable condition. The little leaven which should have leavened the mighty mass, may be supposed to have nearly lost its fermenting qualities. We would not, however, say like the prophet Elijah, ready to die under the juniper tree, that God has not a remnant left among that people. An animating process of renovation is at work. Some of the agents employed, and the pleasing indications of success shall be mentioned.

"Among these may be ranked, as one of the first, the Bible Society of Paris, with its forty or fifty auxiliaries, established in the most important cities. It was ascertained that for more than twenty years not a single edition of the scriptures had been published in France previous to an impression printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Bible societies are now warmly patronised; and when the agent from the Paris society proceeded to Lyons to establish another there, the crowd was so immense that it was found necessary to address them in the open air. Roman Catholics had objected to the diffusion of the scriptures in the vernacular tongue, that they were not translated from the authorized Vulgate. Versions from the Latin have accordingly been made by Professor Van Ess in Germany, and the Baron de Sacy in France; men who are themselves Papists in profession.

"The missionary society instituted in the French metropolis employs an American, Rev. Jonas King, in Palestine; and, like all other missionary institutions, has re-acted most beneficially on the churches at home. A more

general attention to the things which God is doing through the earth, is excited, and the monthly concert of prayer is generally observed in the southern districts. Very great exertions have been made to introduce the Lancasterian method of teaching, and schools for *mutual instruction*, as they are called, are now very numerous.

"But it is chiefly by the preaching of the gospel that God chooses to accomplish every great moral revolution, and the pulpit

> 'Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand.
> The most important and effectual guard,
> Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.'

A small number of zealous and able ministers of the gospel are found in a few of the most important posts in the country. M. Martin, of Bordeaux, M. Lessignol, of Montpellier, and M. Mallan, of Geneva, are not unknown to the Christian public. In Germany, two men have arisen in the bosom of the Roman Catholic church, each of whom well deserves the tittle of *Leuconomas redivivus*. Lindell, by his bold and faithful preaching of the gospel, drew upon himself the odium of the Popish ecclesiastics, who were about to shut him up in a monastery for life. But receiving an invitation from the Prince Galitzin to go to St. Petersburgh, they dared not detain him. He has since renounced all connection with the Romish church.

"The other luminary of the German church is Gossner. The unbounded popularity of this man of God attracts vast crowds wherever he preaches. He has been known to address from twenty-five to thirty thousand persons in the open fields. His useful zeal was not long in drawing down persecution upon his head. He was thrown into

prison, and confined for six months, when he was released at the solicitation of the Emperor Alexander, who had him transported to the Russian capital. He is preaching there now, with a great blessing upon his labors. In the northern circles of Germany there has been a very general religious excitement of late; and such is the progress of enlightened views, that it is supposed that the whole of that portion of central Europe is nearly ready to throw off the yoke of the Pope. In Switzerland, too, the labors of a Catholic priest, named Boos, have been much blessed. A work which he published, on justification by faith, contains those very views of this doctrine which Luther considered the foundations of the Church.

"But to return. The benevolent enterprise of British Christians instituted, in the year 1818, the Continental Society, whose object was to spread the knowledge of the gospel in France, by assisting local preachers of an evangelical stamp, and employing agents, who should traverse the country in all directions, carrying with them the everlasting gospel. From twelve to twenty of these laborious itinerants have been in this manner constantly employed. In many instances, they have been received with open arms by the settled pastors, to whom they have been useful in directing to clearer views of the truth, and encouraging them in their evangelicaldiligence. Many a destitute and scattered flock of Jesus Christ has by them heard the voice of the Great Shepherd, and many and signal have been the instances of conversion under their ministrations. If my memory fails me not, it was by the preaching of one of these evangelists that a very extensive revival took place in one of the cantons of Switzerland, in which seventeen ministers were brought to the experimental knowledge of

the truth. In the valleys of Piedmont, so sacred to every pious recollection, they have visited the primitive Waldenses, a people who are now about eighteen thousand in number, and who would hail the assistance of gospel laborers with transport. They have heard of a congregation of four hundred shepherds on the French side of the Pyrenees, who have had no minister since the revocation of the edict of Nantz, but who still meet together every sabbath to read the scriptures and pray.

"Connected with the Continental Society, is a singular and useful class of men, the Colporteurs. These are pious young men, who travel through the villages with packages of Bibles, tracts, and pious books. They visit from house to house, inquiring for those who are destitute of the word of life; have much religious conversation with the inhabitants, and frequently drop a short exhortation to the little companies that cluster around their package of Bibles. They usually call on the Romish curates, and have found many of them who had never seen a New Testament before!—a book which they have in many instances purchased with eagerness.

"From the preceding statements, it is evident that this "*great nation*," as they have styled themselves, are in an interesting and hopeful condition. Never since the reformation have the fields appeared whiter for the harvest. What a triumph to the Church would it be, if France should be Christianized! There is not a country on the globe which from its location, resources, or influence, could be more instrumental in the universal propagation of the gospel. Frenchmen have in our associations become so much connected with warfare and bloodshed, that we have almost forgotten that they are immortal beings, and as susceptible

of a religious influence as any other people. In our endeavors to extend the gospel through the world, it becomes us not to overlook a nation who are highly civilized, who have their language fixed, and the Bible translated, who are accessible, and many of them desirous to be taught, and who, once evangelized themselves, possess the means of extending the blessing far and wide. An American would in that country find a much more direct way to the hearts of the people than an Englishman. Why, then, does not the American Church send her messengers of salvation to them? Why have we no such institution as the Continental Society of London? The maintenance of missionaries in that country would be as cheap as in any part of the world. We trust there are young men who are willing to go upon so noble an enterprise; who, ready to spend their lives in the propagation of the gospel, would desire no easier employment than to go forth and scatter the seed of truth wherever there was soil to receive it. That singular interest which the truth, faithfully declared, has, where it has been for a long while unheard and unknown, might be expected; and a generation of Frenchmen, it might be hoped, would rise up to bless the men who had sought the things which are Jesus Christ's, while so many seek the things which are their own. France, which has been fertilized more than any other country by the blood of martyrs, and signalized more than any other by the awful displays of human depravity and the triumphs of irreligion—France, we trust, is in a more remarkable manner than any other country to experience the energies of Divine Grace.

J. S. C."

"*Princeton, April* 7, 1824."

Mr. Christmas left the Theological Seminary in April, 1824, and proceeded to Philadelphia, to attend a meeting of the Presbytery, by which he was licensed to preach the Gospel. He read to that body a narrative of his religious experience, in which, alluding to the period of his conversion, he says: "Painting, which I had hitherto been much engaged at, and which, with an enthusiastical attachment, I had resolved on as a profession, now lost its charms; I deplored what I considered an idolatrous love of a fine art. Such an alienation of affection from my old pursuits took place, as a few months before I had considered impossible. The gospel ministry, which had formerly been a subject of aversion, I now began to think would be a most delightful employment."

He had scarcely received his license, when a messenger from the new Presbyterian Church in Montreal arrived in Philadelphia, with a view to obtain him for their pastor. "I was," he writes, "at this time exceedingly desirous of going on a mission among the scattered and destitute Protestant churches of France. When I received the proposal of this messenger, I was much averse to it, and persuaded him to return to New-York and seek another candidate, which he did. In a few days I received a letter, saying he was waiting there for me; and shortly after he came again himself to take me. I was reluctant and hesitating; but having prayed, and received the unanimous counsel of my friends and ministerial brethren, I went with him, and on the fifth of May reached Montreal." At the end of three weeks the congregation gave him an unanimous call; and having become a member of the presbytery of New York, he was ordained by a committee of that body on the first of August, 1824. He now entered on a field of exertion, in

which there was very much to do, with a constitution not naturally robust, and which, it is presumed, was already in some degree impaired; and in a climate the extremes of which he was not able to endure. He, however, persevered with the spirit and fortitude of a martyr for four years, and until his physician warned him to remove, or expect a speedy termination of his life. He early became attached to his people, and deeply concerned for their spiritual welfare, and for their sake struggled through several periods of severe illness, when every earthly consideration moved him to withdraw. Events showed that he had a great work to do there: and by temporary absence, travel, and rest, his exhausted strength was regained, and his wonted vigor repeatedly restored.

In June, 1825, he married Miss Louisa Jones, daughter of Mr. Perez Jones, of the city of New York; who, by her piety, intelligence, and wisdom, her meek and affectionate spirit, and the dignity and amiableness of her manners, was singularly well suited to him, and to the station she was called to occupy.

His ministerial and pastoral labors were eminently beneficial to his people, throughout the whole period of his residence with them; and especially in the early part of 1827, his church was greatly blessed and enlarged, by a powerful work of the Holy Spirit. About one hundred of those who appeared to be savingly benefitted, were added to that church. Of various others belonging to different places and religious connections, five or six were inhabitants of St. Andrew's, a town about forty-five miles west from Montreal, to which place he made a visit of four or five weeks early in the autumn when a similar work of grace commenced, and was promoted by his instrumentality, and about thirty persons were

added to the Church. Near the close of the same year, a renewed religious attention appeared in his own congregation, and about twenty were recognized as hopeful converts.

The following brief review of his principal labors while pastor of that church, and of some of their results, was drawn up by him shortly after his removal thence:—

"I have reason to bless God for the great good, direct and indirect, which he has made me the means of doing. I hope I may number considerably above an hundred souls converted through my instrumentality. I have improved my acquaintance, both with the Greek and Hebrew languages, and have been growing in the knowledge of the English Bible. My mind has been enlightened and instructed onmany points of Christian doctrine; particularly depravity, the will, natural and moral inability, and the nature of the prayers of the impenitent."

"Among other labors I delivered several unwritten lectures on ecclesiastical history, in the Methodist chapel.

"2. A series of Wednesday evening lectures on the apostles' creed.

"3. Constructed a biographical chart for nineteen centuries.

"4. Wrote the report of the Bible Society for the year ending 1826. (Published.)

"5. Wrote the tract on repentance, No. 183 of the series of the American Tract Society, which God has already blessed to four individuals that I have heard of."

"6. Wrote an essay on the institution and perpetuity of the Christian Sabbath, of seventy MS. pages, which was submitted for a premium, with, I believe, nearly fifty others, to the committee of the Albany Presbytery."

"7. Conducted a controversial discussion with a Catho-

lic priest and a Catholic layman, in a public print. The several pieces were afterwards republished in a pamphlet of sixty-four pages."

"8. Wrote and published an 'Appeal to the Inhabitants of Lower Canada on the disuse of Ardent Spirits:' after the formation of the Temperance Society."

"9. Wrote and published a discourse on the nature of that inability which prevents the sinner from embracing the gospel. 44 pp. 8vo."

Succeeding the above is a list of the principal books he had read during the same period, and a general view of his entire studies in every department of literature and science, which he calls an estimate of his knowledge and ignorance, together with his plan for future acquisitions.

The tract before mentioned on repentance was written in April, 1826. He says of it in one of his memoranda of that period, "If this tract is published I shall consider it the most useful labor of my life." The following notice of it was communicated in the summer of 1828, at a conference of churches in Connecticut, by a delegate. 'In a town not far from New-Haven, in April last, (1828,) a pious father, passing the street, observed a paper partly covered with dust, which proved to be the tract No. 183 on repentance. He carried it home and read it to his family. The next morning his daughter read it, retired to her room, and formed a solemn resolution not to rest without that repentance which it recommends. Her anxiety and distress increased to such a degree, that her friends and neighbors were alarmed, and were greatly affected by the evidence they saw in her case of the operations of the Spirit of God. It was not long before she appeared truly

penitent and reconciled to God. Her brother and another young man were deeply affected by the scene; were convicted of their sins, and soon hopefully converted; and at the time when this narration was given two others of her friends were inquiring with earnestness 'what they must do to be saved.' This tract is recommended to the reader for his own benefit and for circulation. It exhibits the nature of repentance in a clear and concise manner; and presents the most affecting considerations to induce an immediate performance of the duty.

His essay on the institution and perpetuity of the Christian Sabbath, does not appear to have gained the award of the committee to whom it was communicated, nor to have been returned, owing doubtless, to the want of directions to that effect. This was a subject of the most lively interest to him. He esteemed the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and he was tenderly conscientious to honor the Lord during its sacred hours, not doing his own ways, nor finding his own pleasure. There are many notices to this effect scattered up and down among his papers; and it was the subject of a number of his sermons and other pulpit exercises. In two discourses, in particular, on the fourth commandment, written in 1826, he illustrated the following positions:—

I. That the Sabbath is of divine authority and perpetual obligation; which occupies the whole of the first discourse.

II. The manner in which it is to be kept.

1 That we are required to prepare beforehand for its sanctification.

2. It is to be sanctified by avoiding idleness, recreations and business, and devoutly attending upon its appropriate

religious duties. He shows how it may be profaned by idleness, amusement and business; and points out the principal duties and services to be attended to.

His controversial discussion was begun in a public print by a Catholic priest, who was excited thereto by a published account of the recent revival of religion. In his replies to the priest and his helpers, he made a spirited attack on the errors of Popery, which soon put a period to the controversy.

His appeal to the inhabitants of Lower Canada, on the subject of temperance, was published in June, 1828, in an octavo pamphlet, with the constitution of the Montreal Society for the promotion of Temperance; and was widely circulated. He exhibits in vivid colors the ruinous effects of intemperance; shows that the moderate consumption of intoxicating liquors is dangerous and of no benefit; and finally, that it is the bounden duty of every person entirely to relinquish and abstain from such liquors, unless required as medicine. The writing of this appeal was one of the last services which he performed in that country; and it has doubtless been extensively useful. In a review of it in the *Christian Spectator* for October of the same year, the writer says, "It is brief, pointed, and clear; goes the whole length of utter banishment, and exhibits the most compendious view we have met with, of the great doctrines of temperance which are gaining such prodigious currency."

His discourse on the nature of that inability which prevents the sinner from embracing the gospel, contains a clear and satisfactory elucidation of that very important, and to many minds difficult subject, and inculcates with singular force the practical lessons which his doctrine naturally suggests. He preached the substance of this discourse in

two sermons in December, 1827, and immediately after published it by request of his congregation. It has been pronounced by competent judges to be the ablest, most comprehensive, and best written discussion of this subject which has ever issued from the press; and it is therefore inserted in this volume.

It may be suitable to mention here as belonging to this period, another tract communicated by him, and published by the American Tract Society, being No. 252, entitled "Mary La Fleur." It is a brief narrative of the conversion of her whose name it bears, at the period of the revival of religion in his congregation. She had been educated in the Romish system of her fathers, and no one could have had a firmer confidence in it. "But," says the writer, "the change in her was not too great for Him who made her to accomplish. He did it by imparting a keener perception of moral relations, and a quickened sensibility to moral truth. Thus it is that the influence of the Holy Spirit counteracts the delusion of sin, prepares the heart to receive the knowledge of Christ, and becomes an effectual corrective of the manifold forms of destructive error. No sinner thus enlightened can fail of seeing his own vileness, his exposure to endless misery, his inability to satisfy the justice of God, the free redemption through the cross of Christ, and the necessity of personal holiness in order to eternal salvation." When the subject of this narrative was taken by her Popish friends to the priest and required to confess what they deemed her soul-destroying heresy, she said to the confessor "that she thought it needless to recount her sins to him, as she had already confessed them to Jesus Christ; and believed herself forgiven; but that she was ready to give a reason of the hope that was in her; which

she did, much to the amazement of the priest, who had never heard such views and feelings expressed in the confessional." He left Montreal early in the summer of 1823, with some faint hope of again regaining his health; but finding himself little benefitted by travel, he solicited a dissolution of his pastoral relation, in which his church and congregation were constrained to concur; and his connection with them was dissolved at a meeting of the presbytery in October. At this period, October 16, he wrote the following memorandum:—"On this day I commence my temporary residence in New York city, to wait and see what God will do for me. My wife and our two children with myself, are residing with our father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, to whose kindness we are indebted for a home during this season of my inability to discharge my pastoral duties. After carrying the first proof-sheet of my 'Farewell Letter,' to the printer, I entered the meeting of the presbytery on the fourth day of its session. Upon my application by letter, previously forwarded from Danbury, the pastoral relation subsisting between me and my people in Canada has been formally dissolved. And thus is my bark at once cut loose from the place where it has been moored, amidst storms and calms, for more than four years past."

In the letter from the church to the presbytery, concurring in his request to be released, they say: "In thus separating from our beloved pastor, while we are obliged to submit to the painful dispensation, we can only add the expression of our unfeigned regard for him, our satisfaction with the faithful and able manner in which his ministry has been fulfilled; our fervent prayers for his restoration to health and usefulness, and our solicitude that he may

ever enjoy the Divine benediction." On the other hand, he bears honorable testimony to their affection, tenderness and kindness towards him, during his residence among them, and on his taking a final leave of them.

The following is a part of his letter to the presbytery on this occasion, dated Danbury, Conn., 11th October, 1828.

"*To the Moderator of the first Presbytery of New-York.*

"REVEREND SIR,—Circumstances of a domestic nature may prevent my attendance at this meeting of the Presbytery. By this communication I wish, in pursuance of an intention which I have duly made known to the parties concerned, to apply for a dissolution of the pastoral relation which I at present sustain to the American Presbyterian Society of Montreal, Lower Canada.

"You have a right to know my reasons for taking a step so important and solemn to them and to me, and I will briefly give them. They are my present inability to discharge the duties of the station, and the little probability that my health would ever be better amidst the extremes of that climate, and the toils imposed by the peculiar state and solitary position of the field of labor. For three successive years I have been annually prostrated by the rapid and debilitating transition from the rigor of winter to the heat of summer, and obliged to seek a renovation of health by absence and travelling. About fourteen months since, in view of the repeated attacks by which my constitution and life were endangered, I determined finally to leave the province, and returned to Montreal with the intention of doing so without delay. While engaged in making the arrangements for such a measure, my health was suddenly and

surprisingly restored, and such were the affectionate entreaties of my people for my continuance among them, that I consented to make the experiment for another year. I did so. But the trial has brought me to look over the crumbling verge of the grave. The certificate of the highest medical authorities in your city, which I obtained in the month of August last, has since become unnecessary to convince any one, that I must not only leave Canada, but for some time, perhaps for ever, relinquish the much loved duties of the ministry."

The Farewell Letter, above mentioned, to his church and congregation, is inserted at the close of this volume, as an expression of his mind and heart, which of itself might suffice to secure for him the love and gratitude of all who read it. It were superfluous to say any thing with a view to add to the interest of his performance, or render any of its passages more striking or impressive. But the reader will consider the circumstances in which it was produced: after months of painful debility, and in the midst of anxious uncertainty for himself and his family; at a distance from his friends and the scenes of his usefulness; and, in short, when encompassed with causes of depression and sorrow. In this situation, like Paul in bonds writing to his Philippians and Thessalonians, he wrote to his people an epistle which few men in health would find it easy to write, and which few in a like case would so much as think of attempting,—encouraging, comforting, exhorting, and warning them, as a father doth his children. Let the reader turn to 1st Thessalonians, especially the three first chapters, and he will see with what feelings his soul was full. His church, which had increased during his ministry from about twenty to one hundred and fifty members, was surrounded with

the thick darkness of Popish error and delusion; and he feared lest, after his departure, grievous wolves might enter in among them, not sparing the flock. He therefore gave them this faithful testimony; and with the earnestness and eloquence of Christian love, counselled them for their present and eternal good.

Mr. Christmas now felt in a manner lost,—those official relations and duties, which both in sickness and in health had excited and directed his utmost exertions, being dissolved, and his prospects of future health, employment and usefulness being obscure and disheartening. Instead, however, of yielding to despondency and gloom, he at once summons up all his energies, and as it were with his eye upon the opening grave, begins his pilgrimage anew, resolved not to waste or lose a moment that remained to him. On the very day that his pastoral relation was dissolved, he commenced in a quarto volume the notices above quoted of his principal studies and writings while in Canada, and near the beginning of the book wrote the following:—

"Though convinced by painful experience of the futility of mere resolutions, still as *all that is valuable and permanent in character is founded on fixed principles,* which every man must have, and which most men will find it beneficial to record and review, I proceed to express what ought to be the leading principles of my life, and which, I pray God, may be transcribed in my future history.

"I devote myself and all I am, to the glory and service of God, whose I am, and whose I have professed to be in heart, for time and eternity.

"That I may best serve him, I am bound to promote and preserve the perfection of my corporeal, intellectual, and moral nature.

"Bodily health I have learned to be indispensable to the acquirement and communication of knowledge.

"I will ever be a learner; study first those things which are of greatest importance, and will ever consider strength and discipline of mind preferable to a mass of knowledge, and holiness of heart more desirable than an accumulation of learning."

He continued to write in this book occasionally, till near the close of 1829, of passing occurrences, plans, and hints of "things to be done," his feeble and discouraging state of health, and the means of relief.

It remains very briefly to sketch the subsequent events of his life.

In December, 1828, he prepared for a voyage, as chaplain of one of the public ships, which he hoped might benefit his health. But there being more delay before he could sail than was consistent at that season with his feeble state, he sailed early in January, 1829, for New Orleans, as agent for the American Bible Society. Finding himself, on his arrival there, unfavorably affected by the climate, and unable to speak in public or make any considerable effort any way, he soon returned. On reaching his family, he found that his youngest daughter had been ill during his absence, and was now near death. On the seventh of April she was taken from them, aged six months. A few days subsequent to this event, their other daughter, then nearly three years old, was taken ill, and after a fortnight's struggle with disease and pain, was likewise removed on Lord's day morning, May third, as if in anticipation of the release of both her parents.

Owing to these afflicting occurrences, and the fatigue and anxiety attending them, the health of Mrs. Christmas

had already begun perceptibly to decline; and his being but slightly benefitted by his voyage, they accepted an invitation from their endeared friend Mr. Wilder, to pass the summer at his residence in Bolton, Massachusetts. There Mr. Christmas' health was in a considerable degree recruited, and he preached to a newly formed church and congregation in that place, and was urged to become their pastor. Mrs. Christmas, however, it was soon apparent, was fast sinking under the effects of pulmonary consumption. Early in July they returned to this city, and on the Lord's day, August ninth, after a rapid decline and much severe suffering, having glorified her God and Saviour by her meek submission, her joy in the promises of the Gospel, her faith and patience, her repeated testimony on behalf of vital piety, her perfect readiness and willingness to depart, and her triumphant confidence in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, she fell asleep.

The reader may imagine the tendency of this bereavement upon sensibilities and affections like those of Mr. Christmas. Never were two persons more perfectly united in heart and mind, in taste and judgment, in their views and experience of religion, and in the whole aim and purpose of life than those now separated. The cup of grief could not fail at times to overflow, and at intervals he went to the grave to weep there.*

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* No worthier tribute can be paid to their joint memory, than by quoting the following passage from a sermon on the advantages of Christianity over all other religions, which he preached on the second Sabbath preceding that on which his own death occurred. This was the last sermon that he wrote; and by his endorsement on it, it appears that he wrote it on the twenty-

He had one unfailing resource, the throne of grace, to which he constantly repaired; and he now realized the inestimable advantages of a well regulated and disciplined mind, by which he was enabled to regard events in their proper connections and relations, and to engage himself in duties of active obedience, instead of being paralyzed with sorrow, loneliness, pain, and discouragement. From some indications of returning health, he felt that Providence might have something yet for him to do, and he girded

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sixth and twenty-seventh of February, 1830, on one of which days it is known that he took a walk to the place where his departed companion was buried. Having contrasted the principal systems of false religion with Christianity, he dwells on the peculiar consolations and hopes of this divine religion, and introduces the following illustration:

"I saw a mourner standing at eventide over the grave of one dearest to him on earth. The memory of joys that were past came crowding on his soul. 'And is this,' said he, 'all that remains of one so loved and so lovely? I call, but no voice answers. Oh! my loved one, wilt thou not hear? Oh, death! inexorable death! what hast thou done? Let me too die. I would not live always. Let me lie down and forget my sorrow in the slumber of the grave.' While he thought thus in agony, the gentle form of Christianity came by. She bade him look upward, and to the eye of faith the heavens were disclosed. He saw the ineffable glory of God. He heard the song and the transport of the great multitude which no man can number around the throne. There were the spirits of the just made perfect; there the spirit of her he mourned. Their happiness was pure, permanent, perfect. The mourner then wiped the tears from his eyes, took courage, and thanked God. 'All the days of my appointed time,' said he, 'will I wait till my change come;' and he returned to the duties of life, no longer sorrowing as those who have no hope."

himself anew for any service to which he might be called, anxious only to fill up what remained of life in such a manner as to be every moment ready for its termination.

In the course of this season he wrote for the City Temperance Society an admirable "Address to Physicians," adapted to enlist their zealous co-operation in behalf of that cause. He also wrote for that society an appeal "To Grocers," tending to dissuade them from selling intoxicating liquors; and likewise for the American Tract Society several prize handbill tracts, which were accepted and published.

About the first of October he accepted the unanimous call of the Bowery Presbyterian Church and congregation to be their pastor; and was installed as such on the fourteenth of that month. Here his ministerial and pastoral labors were in all respects abundantly acceptable, and besides being the means of the conversion of several of his hearers, his instructions, prayers and example, in public and private, were eminently such as to benefit his people, and rapidly to extend the sphere of his agency and influence. In the midst, however, of his usefulness, and when hope was entertained that his health might be entirely re-established, he was after a brief illness suddenly called hence on Sunday morning, March 14, 1830, aged twenty-six years and eleven months.

Having perfect possession of all his mental faculties, he, in full view of the near approach of death, employed several hours in devotional exercises and conversation. He prayed especially for his parents and other relatives, for his church, and for the interests of Zion generally. He said he had lately felt more than ever the value of the soul, and that in order to a more zealous and faithful perfor-

mance of his duties as a minister of the gospel, he had dedicated himself anew to God; and had commenced a course of visiting, exhortation, and prayer among his people, when he took the cold which brought on his present illness.

Finally, having satisfactorily replied to various inquiries respecting his feelings in view of the divine perfections and government, and his hopes in the prospect of death; having expressed his unwavering confidence in the atonement and mediation of Christ, and his joyful hope of the glory of God, he deliberately and with a peculiar solemnity and fixedness of mind, reviewed his whole life, and recounted the principal events of it, especially after he began to preach the gospel. He occasionally paused, and freely confessed and condemned what appeared to have been wrong in feeling, motive, or action, in the progress of his history; and he gratefully acknowledged and devoutly praised God for the varied and manifold goodness which he had experienced, and especially rendered thanks for the divine blessing which had been vouchsafed on his labors at Montreal, St. Andrews, and other places. Having finished this review, he turned his thoughts to the glorious method of salvation revealed in the gospel, which for some time engrossed and absorbed his whole attention. Being nearly exhausted, and scarcely able to articulate, he said, "I commend my soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as I trust, sanctified and saved my dear departed wife, and who, I doubt not, has received to himself also my two children, whom I now expect soon to meet in glory." He continued in alternate prayer and praise till his hand, falling on his breast, gave notice that he had ceased to breathe.

In attempting a survey of the character of Mr. Christmas, it seems proper first to observe that in person he was slender and well proportioned, with a finely formed head. His features were regular and beautiful, and there was a gentleness and benignity in them and in his voice and manner, which had their effect on all who saw or heard him, and were a happy index to his mind and heart.

He seemed to possess the various mental faculties in equal perfection, and to cultivate each and all with the same ease and the same success. There was such a balance of the several powers, they operated with such ease and harmony, and his whole intellectual strength was put forth with such readiness and facility, that there scarcely appeared any thing like effort, either in the employments of his study, in his conversation, or his public exercises. In contemplating him, one did not think of a youth precocious in some single respect, or of a man excelling in the power of imagination, reason, invention, or judgment, but almost unavoidably forgot all such distinctions; as in viewing any model of art, we think not of the parts into which it might be divided, but are occupied with the impression which results from the completeness and simplicity of a just combination.

It was doubtless owing, in some degree at least, to this happy constitution, physical and intellectual, that his mental associations and exercises were, as if by a natural law, of the same felicitous cast. He possessed the power of association and combination in a very high degree; and he so employed it that the distinct and comprehensive associations of ideas which were established in his mind, might be described, like a well written essay or sentence, as wanting no essential constituent, and comprising on the one hand

nothing unsuitable or superfluous, and on the other the vivid perceptions of the understanding, in connection with the requisite touches of imagination and taste.

He was exceedingly quick to perceive the relations and proportions of objects, whether physical or mental. There seemed to be spontaneously a justness, completeness, and harmony, in his first views and impressions, and by following them he came rapidly to results, to which minds differently gifted would arrive only by slow and circuitous methods.

This harmony of his mental powers was only heightened, and, as it were, attuned by his affections, which were as constantly exercised as his intellect. Whether it was from habit or from original tendencies, this joint exercise of the intellectual and moral powers was very conspicuous in him. It seemed to be against the law of his being to regard or meditate upon any thing apart from its moral relations; while at the same time he had the liveliest sensibility to truth, rectitude, propriety, and whatsoever is good and lovely, and an entire aversion to every thing of an opposite character.

These brief hints may prepare the way for a more particular delineation of some of the features of his character, the details of which are suggested by the recollections of an intimate acquaintanceship and an attentive perusal of his writings.

The first and most obvious characteristic to be noticed is, *the remarkable purity and simplicity of his mind.* No one who knew him could fail to be impressed with this trait, or to perceive how strikingly it was in keeping with the natural delicacy of his perceptions and feelings, his religious principles and habits, and the rectitude, benevolence, constancy, and decision of his character.

It was easy to perceive that his mind was fortified and guarded by his principles, and enriched with congenial views and associations. The associations which so largely occupied it, taking their rise from leading classes of objects, were as if moulded and harmonized, one suit after another, as his knowledge was extended. Thus his taste for natural scenery, his perception of the beauty of material objects, may be presumed to have presented the first occasion for the establishment of a class of associations, the presence of which was indicated by his efforts at drawing and painting, and which at a subsequent period the imagination partially bodied forth in poetry.

These associations, doubtless, were strengthened by time, and by all those respecting other subjects, which were afterwards formed; for in his mature years he had an exquisite sense of the beauty of the works of creation, and could with his pen or pencil impart his vivid and accurate perceptions and impressions to others. Neither his natural simplicity, his unsophisticated taste, nor the justness of his perceptions were impaired by the progress of time, the increase of cares, or the influence of books and society.

At the most critical period of his life the divine influence of religion was interposed to regulate and sanctify his purposes and affections, to supersede the love of art, and to restrain the indulgence of imagination. A new world of infinite interest and endless prospect was opened to his view. Here was a supreme object of perfect excellence, and scope for the exercise of every affection. The love and service of God in compliance with the gospel became his ruling passion, and his soul was bent on the purity, holiness, and happiness of heaven.

In view of these observations, though they cast but a

feeble light upon the subject, it will not be thought strange that remarkable purity and simplicity of mind is ascribed to him. It has been attempted rather to show how well this trait comported with his mental constitution and habits, than to do justice to it as a feature of his character. It gave a charm and a lustre on the one hand, to his amiableness and his piety as an individual, and on the other, a dignity, and even a venerableness to his character and example, as a teacher and minister of religion. It appeared spontaneously in all his thoughts, words and actions, in his conversation, manners and deportment, in the intimacy of private friendship, and the engagements of public life.

This feature of his mind may be observed every where in his writings; not only in those respects in which it would be most obvious to notice it, but in his method of treating his subjects, not only in the absence of whatever is incompatible with it, but in the simplicity of his views, and the sanctifying tendency of his instructions.

It scarcely needs to be observed how great an advantage he enjoyed in this respect, over those who in early life give undue scope to some passion, fall into some vicious habit, or yield to the temptations of bad example; and whose imaginations and feelings become vitiated and ungovernable. Even should they come to possess unquestioned piety, the retrospect of such things must be painful, and their influence will be likely in many ways to be pernicious, notwithstanding the utmost efforts to discipline the mind, restrain the fancy, and regulate the thoughts and feelings. Happy they who determine from their earliest youth resolutely and perseveringly to resist every temptation, to respect themselves and their immortal destiny, and to guard every avenue to their minds against the intrusion of evil.

Happy they who know least of the evils which exist in the world, whose minds have not lost their native modesty and diffidence, and who have not deceived themselves, nor been deceived by others into the false and pestilent opinion that whatever is evil and corrupting, to be hated and shunned, needs only to be heard or witnessed.

It occurs next to mention *the pervading influence of his piety*, as worthy of distinct consideration.

The spirit of Christian piety, of love to God, benevolence to man, and universal obedience, pervaded his character and constituted the element of his feelings, purposes and conduct. He exhibited in this respect a consistency of character in all the relations he sustained, and the changes he experienced, which is lamentably rare. It appeared not merely in his devotions and other religious exercises, but in his constant walk and conversation, his habits and employments, his temper and deportment, his conscientiousness, humility and self-denial, his prudence, considerateness, and care to avoid even the appearance of evil.

Religion occupying the sources of emotion, the springs of action, reigned in his affections and sympathies, and stamped its impress on his opinions, habits, and manners. No one could for a moment imagine it to be secondary to any other influence or object, whether regarding him in his individual, social, or public capacity. Far from consisting in an insulated set of notions and feelings, to be called up on certain occasions, it held a supreme sway, and was the chosen and all sufficient means of his happiness; happiness flowing from the state of reconciliation, the harmony existing between his feelings, desires and purposes, and the divine perfections, laws and requirements. Hence his delight in all the duties and exercises of religion, public and

private, especially in that of prayer; and the utter insufficiency of all other means of enjoyment and objects of pursuit.

The same order and simplicity prevailed in this respect as in the rest of his character. The things of religion lay in his mind in their due relations, connecting the high interests of the soul and of eternity with the duties and privileges of every hour; and with all their influence constraining him to have nothing else to do, no object of desire or pursuit but to glorify God by active obedience and patient suffering.

He diligently studied the books of scripture and of providence; and while his mind was entirely made up in regard to the doctrines and requirements of religion, as well as the necessity of practising it in order to salvation, he felt that to serve and glorify God by obedience, was alone worthy the pursuit and consistent with the present and future happiness of a rational and accountable being. The great themes of revelation were present to his mind in their connection with the glory of God, and the character and destiny of man. An enlightened apprehension of the method of salvation, the wonders of redeeming love, the infinite revenue of glory to be secured by the divine government from the agency of creatures; and on the other hand, a lively and humiliating conviction of the prevalence and the evil of sin, the miserable condition of the impenitent world, and his own personal obligations to be holy, and to lay himself out to diffuse abroad the influence of Christian love, and the blessings of salvation; such were the solemn and heart-stirring considerations in view of which he thought and acted. It was not the contracted project of a party, nor any thing peculiar to a sect, that

engaged his affections and characterized his piety; but that boundless philanthrophy, benevolence, and good will, which was displayed in the mission of the Saviour, and which, though it embraces the whole universe, and seeks to reclaim and save the whole race of man, and to deliver the world from wickedness and misery, yet exerts all its energy in the patient, humble, self-denying performance of present duty; it was that love which suffereth long and is kind, which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, and never faileth. Alas! that this spirit should so seldom have a decided and uniform sway, over the temper and conduct; that religion should so seldom supersede all other objects of regard; that the exercise of the affections in the love of God and his kingdom, should not oftener extinguish selfish feelings, and confer that degree of pure enjoyment and those bright anticipations, with which nothing would willingly be permitted to interfere. Alas! that apathy on the one hand, and false zeal on the other, zeal arising from errors and illusions of the imagination, disregarding the facts and lessons of experience and the sober dictates of good sense, and requiring novelty and extravagance, both of object and method,—should ever usurp the place of that piety, which, engrossing the heart, employs itself in the plainest and commonest duties, and in unceasing efforts of obedience to all the commands of God.

Another feature of his character deserving to be distinctly mentioned, was seen in *the influence of his principles over his conduct.*

To say that he acted from principle, would convey but

a faint impression of what is intended. It seemed essential to his satisfaction to perceive and feel the obligation, reason, or principle, in compliance with which he was to act. It suited his views and feelings to dwell on the laws and precepts of the Bible, as rules of conduct of divine authority and perpetual obligation. He delighted in the law of God, and, in the performance of duty, derived pleasure from knowing and perceiving that God, in his boundless wisdom and goodness, required it. He had no idea, as he somewhere writes, of happiness apart from holiness, nor of holiness apart from intelligent obedience, the doing of known duty in view of the true reasons for it, the performance of right acts from right motives. Hence he studiously gave to his principles, and to the great truths and facts of reason and revelation, all possible sway over his feelings and conduct; and his mind rested on them with unwavering confidence. And hence, what has seemed strange to many, the perfect inflexibility of his character, the constancy of his purpose, the firmness of his resolution, when called on to meet any question of principle.

And hence, also, the independence of his mind, the courage and confidence with which he investigated every subject for himself, and followed evidence wherever it led. From what has already been said, the reader may easily imagine how well he knew what constituted evidence, and how much satisfaction the perception of it afforded him. It was not enough for him that others believed, allowed, or practised; he was not content until he saw the reason, and his hands as it were handled the evidence. This with his love of truth, his reverence of the divine authority, and his sense of obligation, guarded him against rash conclusions, and led him cheerfully to renounce whatever he

found to be erroneous, and to adopt what he found to be in accordance with the law and the testimony.

There was a directness and steadiness in his perceptions and aims, corresponding to the integrity and constancy of his mind, which tended to give his principles a uniform sway over his feelings as well as his conduct, and which allowed no place to fickleness, ambiguity, or indecision. This part of his character was advantageously manifested in the great variety of his experience in the different situations in which he was placed; in the alternations of prosperity and adversity, favor and opposition, ease and suffering, joy and grief. There was that about his temper and deportment in these diversified circumstances, which could not fail to satisfy those who were intimate with him, that it was his reliance, not upon feelings but principles, that sustained him, and that he was not less under their sway and influence when unseen by mortal eyes, than when in the midst of society.

It were a salutary exercise for any one of kindred views and feelings, to follow such a mind into its retirement; there, apart from the world to lay its cares at the foot of the cross, and by faith in the principles and facts of religion, the truths and promises of the Bible, to converse with the unseen world and worship God. The exercises and meditations proper to such an occasion, are adapted to transform the mind, raise it above all selfish interests and passions, captivate it with the purity and benevolence of the Gospel, and cause it to realize and feel that the yoke of self-denying obedience and patient suffering, is the highest privilege and honor to be attained or desired on earth, by the followers of him who loved us and gave himself for us.

In addition to these general views of his character, it remains to mention some particulars in which his example was worthy of imitation.

1. In regard to the leading object and purpose of his life.

The one single object for which he lived, was *to glorify God, by obedience to his will.* This he kept in view in all his plans, designs, and efforts. It was obedience as a matter of personal and indispensable obligation, which modified and gave point to his purposes and exertions.

In one of his acts of self-dedication, he thus begins : " I devote myself to the glory and service of God:" and from numerous indications in his writings, it is evident that this was the particular view which he cherished, and to which he constantly had reference. Far from considering religion a mere matter of privilege to be passively enjoyed, he felt the force of those precepts which require universal and perpetual obedience ; and having cordially enlisted in the service of God, he surveyed the field of effort, considered what was to be done, and especially what he was to do, and applied himself to the performance of his duty.

He was aware that the purpose for which he lived required not only labor, perseverance, patience, and faith, but likewise self-denial, and a constant warfare with the powers of evil. Nevertheless, he chose it, and continued to choose it, with all the efforts and sacrifices it involved, and was never more disposed to abound in effort and self-denial, than in the last weeks of his life. He closes the sermon preached a fortnight before his death, on the advantages of Christianity, already referred to, with the following sentences :

" Christianity is all I want. It meets my case as a sinner, as a sufferer, as an immortal being, as a creature desirous of happiness. It supplies every want, anticipates every desire, fills the soul, and in the end saves the whole

man. I am rationally and fully convinced by its evidence. I believe the promises of this holy book, the word of God. *I will yield myself in obedience to its precepts. I will do my utmost through life to spread its triumphs.* I will hope for its consolations in the darkest night of sorrow; and in the dissolution and wreck of nature I will cling to this last plank, assured that it will carry me through the surging billows, to the peaceful shore of eternity. So may it be; and to God shall be glory evermore, through the merits of the Lamb that was slain."

This singleness of purpose had many advantages. In general, it left but one question to be determined, namely: What was it his duty to do? Its paramount sway and influence tended to counteract and prevent the risings of selfishness, to exclude all sinister views and objects; and to lead him to study and imitate the example of the Saviour, to imbibe his spirit; to dwell on the design of his mediatorial work and government, and constantly to renew his determination, whatever course others might pursue, to do all in his power to advance the interests and honor of truth and righteousness.

It was in comformity with his object and his views, that he was ever anxious to perform what he undertook, in the best manner he was capable of. He spared no pains with respect to matter or manner, either in his preparations, or in the performance of duty. He kept his eye steadily on his object, as conscious of the divine inspection, and anxious to be accepted in all that he did. He took great pains to discipline his mind by systematic studies and exercises; and that he might neither lose any time, nor be unprepared for his public services, when his state of health would not permit him to write, he often dictated his sermons to an

amanuensis. There are among his manuscripts a considerable number which were written in this way, chiefly when travelling or at some place of temporary sojourn, and when such efforts, though doubtless in his opinion very necessary, must have been very difficult. These sermons do not appear to be inferior to those generally which he wrote himself. They bear all the marks of his habits of thinking and his style of composition.

He likewise, when feeble and depressed and in danger of growing inactive and useless, was in the habit of reading Euclid daily, and other works of similar tendency, in order to sustain and preserve the powers and tone of his mind.

Finally, his view of the object of life and his sense of obligation led him to urge upon others the immediate performance of their duty. He was perfectly assured that the gospel, as the means of the conversion and sanctification of men, was designed and every way adapted, by its authority and its array of motives and sanctions, to produce present, immediate effects; and he preached it under that conviction and for that end, with all earnestness and fidelity, urging instant compliance with its requirements. The following passage on this point is from the close of one of his sermons, "On the means of Grace," and will, it is presumed, be read with interest.

"There are two methods pursued by ministers and professing Christians in their directions to inquiring sinners, one of which is unwarranted and therefore dangerous, the other is scriptural and therefore safe. When those who pursue the first method are asked by any one, *What must I do to be saved?* they tell him to repent and believe, and so far correctly. When the sinner replies, that he cannot do it, they tell him 'to pray to God to give him a

heart for it; to continue in the use of the means in the hope that he shall find grace; to lie at the pool of the ordinances until the Spirit shall descend to bless him.'

"Now this counsel given to an inquirer, *directly tends to stifle his convictions, is a virtual relinquishment of God's claim on the heart, is an inconsistent direction to do what is as difficult as repentance itself, and is contrary to scriptural direction and scriptural example.*

"Such a counsel directly tends to stifle a sinner's convictions. His conscience has been disturbed. He feels the force of God's demands upon his love and obedience; and it is an unwillingness to comply with these demands, and a sense that he must if he would be saved, that wrings his heart with anguish. Just at this time his spiritual guide, instead of pressing home his obligations, tells him to 'use the means, and lie at the pool, waiting God's time.' Glad to catch at anything rather than immediately comply with them, he uses the means, and prays and reads, and reads and prays, and thinks he is now doing his duty. His conscience is relieved, his distress disappears, and he consoles himself with the thought, that if he is not saved it will not be his fault. Thus are his convictions quenched and his fears allayed, by saying *peace, peace, when there is no peace.* The temporary relief thus afforded is the reason why such preaching and such directions are so welcomed by the unregenerate, and why it is called such hard doctrine to preach immediate submission, a circumstance which sometimes solicits a minister to waive the plain dealing of truth.

"In the next place, such a direction is a virtual relinquishment of God's claim on the heart. When the sinner objects to the gospel injunction to repent, that he '*cannot*,'

he is only expressing his repugnance to the duty. It is not true that he cannot, in any other sense than that he *will* not. To direct him then to 'use the means,' in order to get perchance a better heart, is to allow that the objection is valid. Of consequence it follows that God has no right to make such a demand, and the sinner is under no obligation to comply with it. The point in controversy between God and the sinner, viz., his claim on the heart, is conceded to the sinner, and his spiritual guide authorizes him for the present to render something else and something less than his heart, viz., an attendance on the means; authorizes him to continue a little longer in rebellion against God, authorizes him to cherish his heart of enmity until God shall give him a better.

"In the next place, such a direction is inconsistent, for it calls on him to do what is as repugnant to the sinner's feeling as repentance itself. It is presumed that no one who gives such a direction, would advise the sinner to read and pray and hear in an unbelieving and impenitent manner. But to use these means with penitence and faith, implies that he has already done the duty which the direction evades.

"And finally, such a direction is contrary to scriptural instruction and example. The Bible nowhere admits that the sinner cannot comply with his duty. It nowhere directs him to use the means of grace in order to get a heart to repent. It fearlessly directs him to repent, taking it for granted that he can if he will, and there it leaves the matter, and there it leaves the sinner to meet the consequences of impenitence.

"In accordance with this is every direction given to sinners by the preachers of holy writ. Isaiah says, *Wash*

you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well. He calls upon the *wicked man to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* Jeremiah calls upon backsliders in Israel *to circumcise themselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of their hearts.* Ezekiel says, *Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have offended, and make you a new heart and a new spirit..* Joel calls upon sinners in danger to *turn unto the Lord with all their hearts.* John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, saying, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* When the Redeemer began to preach, he said, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* The apostles, in their preaching, made the same unqualified demand of immediate repentance. When the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, said, *Men and brethren, what must we do?* the only direction the apostle gave them was, *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins.* On another occasion he said to the multitude, *Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* James says, *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded.* In all these instances there was no allowance made for the moral impotence of sinners. The duty of sinners was pointed out, and the obligation enforced; but there was no direction to pray to get the disposition to do their first and immediate duty. Nor dare we, if we would conform to apostolical example, pursue a different course.

"If it be said that this places sinners in a hard case, we reply, that they cannot be placed in any different situation until they repent. It is the situation their own impenitence places them in, nor can any relief be warrant-

ably given until they do repent. The gospel has not a word of encouragement until you do this; and when this is done, it is all mercy, and there will be time enough to offer the balm of its consolations. There is no by-road to heaven, there is no entrance to the *narrow way* but by *the straight gate.* We must exhort you to repent and believe the gospel. We dare direct to nothing as a substitute for this, to nothing which implies its procrastination. For there is no time to lose. The next resolve may be, *Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground.* The next discovery of the sinner may be that he is in a world where it is too late to repent. Our next meeting may be at the bar of God, where you shall not have it to say that you were directed to use the means and wait God's time, instead of immediate repentance, and a cordial surrender of your whole hearts to your Creator, Benefactor, Redeemer, and Judge."

II. There was much that is worthy of imitation in *his views of doing good,—of the manner of exerting his agency so as both to glorify God and benefit his fellow-men.*

It has already been observed that the principle of his conduct was obedience to God. It was in compliance with this rule that he endeavored to do good to his fellow-men. It was this, in distinction from mere sympathy and feeling, and from all personal, worldly, and temporal motives, and in distinction from a mere imitation of others, and from that indifference and listlessnes which affects to regard the good result to be accomplished by action, while the obligation of the agent, the principle in obedience to which acceptable actions must be performed, is overlooked or disregarded.

He took a wide survey of the condition of his fellow-

creatures and of the divine dispensations towards them. But while he regarded man, in the relations he sustains to the moral law, the gospel, and the retributions of eternity, as presenting an object of unspeakable interest to every benevolent mind, and as claiming unlimited benevolent exertion, he felt that the supreme and primary rule and aim of every action must be to obey and glorify God. With the utmost solicitude for the renovation and salvation of men, he felt how narrow was the sphere in which his own agency could be directly employed to benefit them, and how liable he was to cause or be the occasion of detriment; that his doings must be limited to prayer, and the presentation of motives to their minds, to persuade and induce them to obey the gospel, while a thousand opposing influences were at work, and the period of probation rapidly passing away.

It was with such views that he prepared for the pulpit —for the offering up of prayer and supplication, and the presentation of motives in his sermons. It was with such views that he estimated the motives to be presented by his manner, his temper, his consistency, his whole demeanor, and felt how incompatible it would be with his design, and how repugnant to the influence of the Holy Spirit, for him to act out of character in these respects.

With his views on this subject, his acute sense of responsibility, and his conscientiousness, it can be no wonder that it was a well considered and cardinal point with him, in every attempt to do good, to beware of doing or occasioning harm. To do some evil by rashness, negligence, or some other fault in matter or manner, while endeavoring to do good, was no more consistent with his ideas of obedience, nor any more excusable in his view of

obligation, than to do or cause the like evil without any such endeavor. He was in this, as in other respects, his own severest censor, and had too clear a view of his obligations, the relations of his conduct, and the sphere he was to move in, to deceive himself in this matter. It were needless to say how far removed he was in this part of his character from those who merely follow the blind impulses of feeling, and the dreams of unrestrained imagination; and whose activity and enjoyments, indifference and gloom, alternate as their feelings are exhilarated or depressed. The fourth, fifth, and first ten verses of the sixth chapter of Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians, may be referred to as exhibiting in the most striking manner, the model on which as a Christian and a minister he was formed; as happily portraying the motives and rules which actuated and governed him; the views he entertained of his personal and official obligations and duties, and of his place and relations, as a responsible agent co-operating with God; the experience in which he largely shared, the holy affections, the exalted hopes, and divine joys, which filled his soul and raised him above the world. Whoever shall study and enter into the spirit of those chapters, will understand his views of doing good more perfectly than they can be described.

The nature and province of moral influence constituted a favorite subject with him, and claimed a large share of study and reflection, which doubtless aided him in the acquisition of the clear and definite ideas which he had of the attributes of moral agency, and of the nature of obligation, of virtue or holiness, and of sin. He was favored by the possession of an unusual share of common sense, and of that practical wisdom, aptitude, and judgment,

which adheres closely to facts and principles, and selects the best means for the attainment of ends. It was by virtue of these qualities that he knew so well how to adapt himself to every description of persons, and how to convince and persuade them by exciting an appropriate exercise of their own minds, assisting them to clear and just perceptions of their character, accountability, and duty, and presenting the requisite motives.

He cordially approved, encouraged, and promoted, the great objects of evangelical benevolence, and was ever ready to render them the utmost service in his power. There are among his papers a dozen or more addresses, which were delivered by him at public meetings of Bible, Missionary, Education, Tract, Sunday school, and other societies, besides a number of brief sketches and references to other similar addresses, and several sermons upon the same subjects. He was among the earliest and most efficient promoters of the temperance reformation, which he continued to aid by his example, his voice, and his pen, to the close of his life.

His attention to the subject of missions while inquiring as to the path of duty for himself, and after choosing and having in view a missionary life, awakened an interest which never subsided. The wretched condition of the human race, the unlimited resources of the gospel, and the duty of those individually and collectively, who have experienced its blessings, were continually before his mind; and he regarded with intense interest the missionary service, and those events of Providence, and movements of the Church, by which the cause of redeeming mercy was advanced.

III. His diligence and his great and persevering efforts to accomplish what he undertook.

Of his diligence it may be superfluous to add anything; except that there was order and system in his indefatigable industry. It was for a long time his practice at the close of each week, to review and note down what he had done in the interval; and to sketch in numerical order the things to be specially attended to, the pastoral visits to be made, the subjects to be studied, the books to be read, &c., the ensuing week. Occasionally he made a like review of longer periods, and laid out a plan of future and more extended efforts and studies. Especially did he do this on any important change in his circumstances, and with particular reference to books and means of preparation for active service.

But he was no less persevering than diligent. As he entered upon every undertaking with a strong sense of duty, and cherished a lively conviction of his obligations, and as his leading object and purpose was to glorify God by obedience to his will, the necessity of perseverance, of renewed and protracted effort, seemed to have no tendency to discourage or fatigue. Being satisfied as to what was his duty and heartily delighting in it, it was a part of his system to make great and persevering efforts to accomplish what he undertook.

IV. It merits to be commemorated as an exemplary practice in him, that *he looked for, desired and expected the beneficial results of his prayers and efforts, both here and hereafter.*

He viewed his own agency equally with other objects, in its connections and relations; and its known or anticipated results were the occasion of serious thought and solicitude. As an accountable agent, and co-worker with God, he put no such mean estimate on his prayers and efforts, as to be

indifferent to their present or future consequences to himself or others. Like the husbandman who ploughs those fields which he intends to plant, and plants in the hope and expectation of a harvest, there was a directness and an appropriateness in his purposes and exertions, which implied an earnest expectation of results. There are in his writings frequent notices expressive of his concern for the success of his labors, and for the holy lives and final happiness of the converts under his ministry; and likewise of the effects which he witnessed of his preaching and writings. A single instance to this effect may be cited. Near the close of 1828, he met in New Jersey a young man then pursuing his studies for the ministry, whose piety commenced under his preaching in Montreal, in 1827. He made a note of the circumstances, and added, with expressions of gratitude to God, that there were then within his knowledge five young men (whose names he subjoined,) preparing for the sacred office, of whose hopeful conversion he had been instrumental.

His sentiments and feelings in relation to this subject, will be best exhibited by the following passages from a sermon which he preached in Montreal, in May, 1828, just before his final departure, entitled, Christian Rewards, from the text, "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." Having largely established the doctrine contained in this passage, he thus proceeds:

"The doctrine of the proportional rewards of the righteous, thus taught by so many passages of scripture, commends itself to our understandings by many reasonable considerations.

"If labor heightens the enjoyment of subsequent repose, if the bitter gives a higher relish to the sweet which suc-

ceeds it, and if sanctified afflictions work out for us a far *more* exceeding and eternal weight of glory, then it follows that he whose labors have been the greatest, must of necessity enjoy a rest the most refreshing, that he who has tasted most of the bitter, shall drink of sweetness the most delicious, and he who has endured the most affliction for Christ, shall be immortally strong to bear the most exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"Again, if a large ingredient in the happiness of heaven consist in an exquisite sense of the divine approbation, then he who has the most faithfully and acceptably served God in his day and generation, must, in the consciousness of that, have the largest measure of happiness. And again, as a high and refined source of our *rejoicing*, is *the testimony of our conscience*, he whose conscience like the apostle's can testify, that in simplicity and godly sincerity he has had his conversation in the world, and has persevered in a patient continuance in well doing, must of course enjoy the most exalted degree of spiritual happiness in heaven.

Besides this, the eminently holy man will, in the future world, have a higher satisfaction in witnessing the good *effects* of his devotedness to God. Here, the seed seems often to be sown in vain, and patience appears to reap a tardy harvest;—there, it will be seen that no labor in the Lord was in vain, that no sincere effort was ever made without in some measure glorifying God. And when all the seed shall have sprung up, and all the harvest shall be gathered in, the holy will have unspeakable satisfaction in the review of their instrumentality in carrying forward the great designs of heaven's mercy to man;—and then shall he who has sown most seed, come rejoicing with the largest

sheaves:—and in witnessing these glorious results, shall *every man receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

"By this arrangement, the Most High, while he has abased the loftiness of man, and exalted himself by a way of salvation, not by works but by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, but as the gift of God, does, at the same time, show his love of holiness and order, by this mark of his approbation upon the good works of his accepted children; and thus throws into the scale of virtue, not only heaven itself, but the various degrees of heaven's glory. And this is no more than what we might expect him to do. Though the greatest and least sinner be both and alike saved through grace abounding by the redemption that is in Christ, yet it is nothing more than what we might expect, that he who has been eminently useful and holy here, should be eminently happy in the world to come. Is it not reasonable to suppose that *Paul the aged*, who had spent his life down to gray hairs in unceasing exertions for the cause of Christ; that *Paul the Apostle*, who long sustained the responsibilities and discharged the arduous duties of that station; that *Paul the martyr*, who had been through a life of peril, in deaths oft, and at last closed his course on the scaffold, should take a higher place, and wear a brighter crown than the infant of days that has just lived, and, without sustaining a responsibility, or enduring a conflict, left this world for a better?

Having answered some objections to the tendency of the doctrine, he closes with the following remarks:

"1. The *doctrine of proportionate rewards suggests to us the reason why a long life is desirable.*

"To an unconverted man, concerning whom it remains

to us yet an uncertainty, life is only valuable as it increases the chance of his being converted. To a converted man it is desirable, not for the happiness he here enjoys, for he would be unspeakably more blessed in heaven, but as it affords him an opportunity of acting for God, and laying up treasure in heaven. On this account it is worth his while to forego a little present pleasure, for the sake of an immense addition to his future felicity. On this account alone it is a great misfortune to die young; and on this account it is, that the *hoary head is a crown of glory when it is found in the way of righteousness.*

"2. This doctrine suggests to us *the importance of our present conduct.* It instructs that every action we perform will be followed with consequences reaching through future ages, and will have its influence in determining our place in heaven, or our place in hell; for the same plan in proportion will extend to the punishment of demerit as well as the reward of virtue. Every day we live has its influence on all our future days, every chord we strike will vibrate through eternity. How diligent then should we be that we be rich toward God! If a merchant, when he is loading his vessel for a foreign market, were assured that he should receive fivefold for every article he freighted, how anxious would he be to improve the occasion, and store his vessel to the utmost of her capacity! How much more anxious should we be to have our lives laden with holiness and crowded with usefulness, knowing as we do that upon our arrival at the shores of eternity, we shall receive for it all an unspeakable reward.

If a husbandman had but one field, which but one year in the course of his life brought him a harvest of gold, how diligent would he be to improve his seed-time, and to

have every vacant inch of the ground cultivated! Such a field in such a year is man's existence; his life upon earth is the seed time; and a harvest more glorious than one of gold shall be gathered in heaven; and as whatsoever we sow that shall we also reap, both in quality and quantity, let us be diligent to improve every inch of ground, to fill up every moment of time, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Oh! if a pang of regret might enter heaven, if the sigh of sorrow might swell the bosom of a glorified spirit, it would be to look back on earth and see opportunities of usefulness neglected, means of grace abused, the godlike privilege of doing good unembraced, and the seed-time for eternity spent in comparative idleness. If you might by diligence for one single day make yourselves comfortable and respectable for life, would you not gladly embrace the opportunity? But is not eternity as much longer than life as life is longer than a day? and is it not the dictate of interest to be strenuous through life in promoting your interests for eternity? Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

V. He presented an edifying example, as a good man subjected to severe trials and sufferings, who, while struggling against temptation, trouble and discouragement, held fast his integrity, persevered in his endeavors to glorify God and promote the happiness and salvation of men, and was sustained by a lively faith in the divine testimonies and promises, and the aids of the sanctifying Spirit. Whether contemplated in his closet, his pastoral labors, his solitary hours of illness, or his deep afflictions and repeated errands to the tomb, when every tie to earth was sundered

and the world was crucified to him and he to the world, a perfect assurance may be felt, that amidst all his loneliness, pain, and sorrow, the insidious approaches and buffetings of temptation were resisted with all the energies of his soul. These griefs and troubles, so far from diminishing his confidence in God, his sense of obligation, and love of duty, heightened them, and gave vividness to his perceptions of the evil of sin, the divine excellency of holiness, the glory of God, and the purity and blessedness of the heavenly state.

He confided with childlike simplicity in the care of Divine Providence. His writings abound with indications of this, and his experience strikingly manifested the constancy and sufficiency of that care. If we consider him as a youth born and brought up in what might then be termed almost a wilderness, with few connections, and apparently surrounded by no circumstances calculated to arouse his genius and prompt him to aspire to high attainments, influence, and usefulness, but on the contrary, met at every step by obstacles and discouragements, which would have proved insurmountable to an ordinary mind; if we consider him rising superior to these difficulties, acquiring a classical education, and exciting admiration by the development of his powers; and when qualified by his studies, and by the experience of religion, to choose an employment for life, we behold him deliberately preferring the service of his Saviour in the sacred office, encountering fresh embarrassments, in the way of a preparation for that object, aiming at a high standard of qualifications, at length succeeding in their attainment, exhibiting a bright though brief career of ministerial labor and usefulness, rising to eminence in the discharge of his public duties, and exerting a wide and valuable influence; and finally, after

enduring severe trials and sufferings, from loss of health and the bereavement of all his family, we witness his tranquil departure in the joy of the Lord, we may well regard him as having richly experienced the care of Providence. We may regard him as having been brought forward by an unusual series of events to exert an important agency in relation to the salvation of many souls, and by his labors and afflictions to be early prepared for the pure services and enjoyments of the heavenly kingdom.

To those who were intimately acquainted with him, who knew his amiableness, his sincerity, modesty, humility, forbearance, kindness, benevolence, and all those kindred traits and qualities which were so blended in his character and shone with so steady a light, and who at the same time appreciated his endowments and qualifications for usefulness, and his attainments and experience as a minister of the gospel, it seemed desirable, not indeed for his own sake but for others, that his life should be prolonged. And there was a single reason why longer life was in his view to be desired, namely as "affording further opportunity of acting for God, and laying up treasure in heaven." And may it not with propriety be asked, in view of the character he had formed, and on supposition that health had been added to his gifts and attainments, and his life extended to twice or thrice its period, who can imagine what would have been the extent of his usefulness? Had he continued proportionably to exemplify the fruits of righteousness, and to grow in knowledge and in grace in after years, as rapidly as he had done in those of his active public exertions, who will venture to imagine to what an extent he would have glorified God, and promoted the temporal and spiritual welfare of men? But divine wisdom and

goodness required him in another sphere; and it remains for those who survive, and especially those who are young and have health, to fill up, as it were, the measure of his usefulness, and accomplish what, with their opportunity, he would have done.

In view of his character and history it were natural to bring into comparison those of different classes of men; to contrast with his their attainments, their supreme object, the manner of exerting their agency, the extent of their obedience, and their hopes and prospects for eternity. But this must be left to individuals, to ministers and laymen; to those who love and obey the gospel, and those who supremely love the world; to those who survive of his own age and acquaintance, and those who are about to come forward upon the stage of life, to exert their agency as accountable creatures, and form their characters for this and the future world. Among all these there surely will be some who will be aroused by his example, some who will be induced to aim at higher attainments in knowledge, virtue, and usefulness; some who will strive to acquire in a like degree the chief excellencies of his character, who will be incited to cultivate his exemplary habits, and like him to avoid offences, and abstain from the very appearance of evil. And will there not be some who, in view of his brightening upward path, will look back with painful regrets upon their own past history; some perhaps of his acquaintances, whose hearts will sink within them as they follow him to the last scene in which he appeared on earth, and feel that he is gone to realise the pure, perfect, and endless happiness which his faith and hope had anticipated; while they, not having entered upon the same path, perceive no ray of light in their own prospect,

and keenly feel their unfitness for a better world, and all their desolateness and misery, when a just view is for a moment forced upon their minds, of the emptiness and vanity of the objects to which they are devoted. If there be one such, the voice from the dead yet speaking to him is, "Turn while this impression exists, and with all your heart obey the gospel, for why will you die?"

Again, in view of his life and character, a life so brief, and yet so expanded with usefulness and promise, and a character so mature in Christian experience, and in qualifications for the duties both of public and private life; we are called on to glorify God for his great goodness to him personally, and through him, to those with whom he was more immediately connected, and to the world. He experienced much of the divine favor in every period of his life; and at the close of it, much of the providential goodness of God, and much of his mercy, his spiritual influence and sanctifying grace. It pleased God in a conspicuous manner to show forth the riches of his love and kindness in him, and to make him the instrument by his example and his active exertions of great good to others. His example was in all respects remarkably pure and truly Christian; and no evidence appears in any of his writings, or in the recollections of those acquainted with him, of any thing of evil tendency, any thing calculated to excite prejudice against religion, or be an occasion of stumbling and reproach. On the contrary, it was the character of his writings, and of his temper and manners, to conciliate the feelings, and win the confidence and respect, of all who came within his influence. There was a simplicity and godly sincerity ever beaming forth in his spirit and deportment, which testified of that wisdom and grace which are from above. The reader will see in this,

cause for devout and admiring gratitude to the glorious Author and Source of all good, to the Saviour and the Sanctifier of men: gratitude that he was kept and shielded from fatal snares and temptations of sin and evil; that he was awakened to perceive his sinfulness and ill dessert; that under the influence of the word and spirit of God he turned from sin to holiness, obeyed the gospel, and devoted himself to the glory and service of God; that he was enabled so happily to exhibit the Christian spirit, to exert an influence so benign on all around him, and was the instrument of so much good to others; and that living and dying he enjoyed the love of God and the hope of eternal life.

In the contemplation of his history likewise, it is obvious to consider how much with such a character may be effected within a brief space of time. The whole period of his active usefulness, after he received license to preach the gospel, scarcely exceeded five years; yet, by consecrating himself wholly to his work, and in a spirit of simple dependence on God, earnestly aiming and desiring to accomplish much, and, in short, by making the most of his time, his gifts and faculties, his acquisitions, his influence, his prayers, his faith, and his hopes, he effected and was the means of great and permanent good in different places; exerted a wide and salutary influence, and exhibited a character and an example alike creditable to religion and beneficial to man. Had he aimed at less, and given but a wavering and divided attention to his great object, his life, had forty years been added to it, might have been less valuable to himself and the world, than it has actually been. While considering his high aims, and the constancy of his purposes, the writer has been reminded of what was related to him some years ago, by the late Rev. Dr. Ryland of Bristol, respecting the pecu-

liar development of character, and superior attainments and usefulness, of his early associates, Carey, Fuller, Sutcliff, Pearce, and others; namely, that when they were obscure and without either learning or influence, they agreed together, and resolved, after much consideration of the state of the world and of the cause of religion, to endeavor by the utmost efforts in their power, respectively 'TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE;' to make the greatest possible attainments in holiness, and to glorify God and benefit their fellow men in the highest possible degree. In pursuance of this resolve, one of the leading objects, which appeared most important to be undertaken, and which best suited his character, was referred to each, to be the engrossing object of his exertions. To Carey it was assigned to lead the way as a missionary to the heathen—to Fuller, to exert his great powers as a biblical student and theological writer—to Ryland himself, to occupy the distinguished office of training young men for the gospel ministry—to Pearce, to rouse the public mind to the subject of missions, &c. The extraordinary attainments, influence, and usefulness of these individuals was, without doubt, owing in a great degree, to the high purposes and aims which they thus solemnly resolved to pursue with indefatigable constancy and zeal through life.

Finally, this memorial may be fitly closed by adopting, with slight accommodation, as appropriate to the subject of it, some brief extracts from what Fuller and Ryland have recorded of their friend and associate, Pearce, by whose death in his thirty-third year they were greatly afflicted.

"By the grace of God he was what he was; and to the honor of grace and not for the glory of a sinful worm, be it recorded. Like all other men he was depraved. He felt it, and lamented it, and longed to be freed from sin; but cer-

tainly, taking him altogether, we have seldom seen a character 'whose excellencies were so many and so uniform, and whose imperfections were so few.' We have seen men rise high in contemplation, who have abounded but little in action. We have seen zeal mingled with bitterness, and candor degenerate into indifference; experimental religion mixed with a large portion of enthusiasm, and what is called rational religion void of every thing that interests the heart of man. We have seen splendid talents tarnished with insufferable pride, seriousness with melancholy, cheerfulness with levity, and great attainments in religion with uncharitable censoriousness towards men of low degree; but we have not seen these things in Christmas.

"There have been few men in whom has been united a greater portion of the contemplative and the active; holy zeal and genuine candor; spirituality and rationality; talents that attracted almost universal applause, and the most unaffected modesty; faithfulness in bearing testimony against evil, with the tenderest compassion to the soul of the evil doer; fortitude that would encounter any difficulty in the way of duty without any thing boisterous, noisy, or overbearing; deep seriousness, with habitual cheerfulness; and a constant aim to promote the highest degrees of piety in himself and others, with a readiness to hope the best of the lowest; not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax."—'*Fuller's Memoir.*'

"One thing I will say, which I could say of very few others, though I have known many of the excellent of the earth, that I never saw or heard of any thing respecting him which grieved me, unless it was his inattention to his health, and that, I believe, was owing to a mistaken idea of his constitution. If any of you know of other faults belonging to

him, be careful to shun them, and be sure to follow him wherein he was a follower of Christ."—'*Dr. Ryland's Sermon.*'

[The *Discourse on Christian Intercession*, referred to on page 28, the *Discourse on the Nature of that Inability which Prevents the Sinner from Embracing the Gospel*, the *Farewell Letter to the American Presbyterian Society of Montreal*, and an extract from the *Annals of the American Pulpit*, are successively inserted in the following pages.]

ON CHRISTIAN INTERCESSION.

"*Making mention of you always in my prayers.*"—Rom. i. 9.

THE most careless reader of the epistolary correspondence of the apostle, cannot fail to remark how often he speaks of praying for others. Has he been instrumental in planting an infant church, and does persecution drive him from his beloved charge, with what affection does he commend them to an ever-present God! Does intelligence reach him of the prosperity of some distant society of believers, with what joyfulness he bows his knees before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to thank him for the news, and implore upon

his fellow Christians a larger measure of the riches of grace! The extent, frequency, and fervor of his intercessions, will surprise any one who shall be at the pains of examining the various hints which we have of his performance of this duty as they lie scattered in various parts of his writings. Scarcely a letter of his which does not give express assurance that they to whom it was addressed had an interest in his daily prayers. Even Philemon, a private Christian in a distant country, was not forgotten. Nor was it those only whom personal acquaintance had made peculiarly dear to the apostle, for whom he used his influence at the throne of grace. Churches he had never visited, cities he had never seen, find a place in a heart which a divine philantrophy had enlarged to contain the world. In a letter written to the Roman Christians, many years before his feet had ever touched the shores of Italy, he thus speaks: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

Permit me, then, to urge upon your imitation this amiable trait of that holy man's character, by suggesting a few observations on the happy effects which the performance of this duty would have upon our own minds, and the blessed results which might be expected on the minds of those for whom we pray.

Though this is one of the most noble and disinterested parts of devotion, I trust there is no impropriety in commencing by a few remarks on the happy influence which the right performance of this duty would have upon our own selves.

We who as dependent creatures are so destitute ourselves, can have little to bestow upon others. The keys which

unlock the treasures of happiness, are in hands mightier than ours; and however we may pity the sufferings, or wish to relieve the necessities of others, all that we can ordinarily do, is to refer them to the same source whence our blessings flow. A wish is mostly all that we can give:—God is the source of all blessing. A wish directed to him is a prayer:—hence, the most natural and commonly the only way we have of giving expression to benevolent feelings, is by praying for others. And though in doing this the benefit of others is our main object, yet we ourselves are not left without a blessing. The duty is doubly blessed; it is blessed to him who asks, and in him who receives. To exercise benevolence in this manner is to increase benevolence. To increase benevolence is to increase happiness; for what larger ingredient is there in happiness than benevolence or love. That man is not the happiest, all whose solicitudes are shrunk up within the narrow compass of his own little self, but he who loves much, and whose affections light upon many objects. The extension of his affections does not imply their weakening: these are waters which spread without becoming shallow. A parent can love each of the whole circle of his children, with as intense an attachment as he did his first born. We are not to suppose that our feelings are capable of rising only to a certain pitch and must there stop; they may be multiplied as fast as there are lovely objects, and rise in height as long as new loveliness is unfolded. How boundlessly then may the soul expatiate in the attributes of Jehovah! He who regards every child of Adam as a brother, has a fountain of pleasure which is sealed up to the hater of his species. He who uses most of this fountain, will have waters the most pure, abundant, and refreshing. Benevolence

prompts prayer, prayer promotes benevolence; and benevolent feelings in exercise are noble, soothing and delightful. Such is the more general operation of the duty upon which I insist. A few of its more particular advantages are worth mentioning. And,

1. It greatly *promotes friendship*. What more likely means to strengthen our social attachments, than day after day to associate them with our holiest feelings, and mingle them with our brightest hopes? The brighter objects of heaven throw a pleasing tint on the dark landscapes of earth. Impressions thus repeated, a friendship thus sanctified, can be neither transient nor grovelling. Indeed, it is hard to see how friendship can be satisfactory and complete without religious hopes. Two companions destitute of religious hopes, are like two travellers who are thrown together in a public conveyance. They journey together for a short time, and then part without the expectation of ever meeting again. If the shortness of life does not prevent much intimacy among irreligious acquaintances, the speedy separation of death must produce a regret unrelieved by hope. But Christian pilgrims indulge the expectation of meeting in one common place of everlasting repose. Their heaven is a social heaven. The company collected will be all the truly excellent who ever have lived or ever will live upon the earth. Even here, though a rolling ocean and ranges of mountains separate them, they may meet around the same mercy-seat. They may even so adjust their intercessions that the wings of the same moment shall carry their mutual supplications to the ear of the prayer-hearing God. This branch of devotion has this advantage above all others, that the movements of faith are seconded and stimulated by the warmth of natural affection.

Too often we are cold and sluggish, we lie becalmed in a condition more irksome than the turbulence of the tempest. No sooner, however, do we begin supplicating for dear friends, than the cords of affection begin to draw; feeling starts from its slumbers, and a brisk gale fills all our wide-expanded sails. What has been said may enable us to estimate how egregiously they err who object to the gospel, that it does not countenance the cultivation of friendship. Where will you find a more delightful picture of affectionate intercourse than that which Luke has drawn of the interview between our Saviour and the two disciples on their way to Emmaus? Where, I would ask, in all history, will you find such instances of noble and self-sacrificing friendship as among the primitive believers?

2. The diligent performance of the duty of intercession would be an effectual *antidote to all unhallowed resentment.*

He who rises from the suppliant attitude in which he has just been confessing his own unworthiness and imploring blessings on others, cannot feel disposed to throw poison into the cup of their happiness. And even if his employment on his knees has failed to kindle in his heart that ardor of good-will to all which he ought to feel, yet the mere desire of consistency will prevent him from throwing about the firebrands, arrows, and death of slander. The purity of many a reputation, a quietude of neighborhoods, and the kindness of domestic intercourse, are among the blessings flowing from the performance of this duty.

3. It would *greatly increase ministerial usefulness.*

If the minister of Jesus Christ, like a faithful high priest, first appeared before the mercy-seat in the most holy place, with the names of the twelve tribes engraved

upon his breast-plate, he would, when he came forth and stood before the congregation, feel an enlargement of heart, a desire of blessing the people, which would impart a spirit and a pathos to his appeals, and give some reason to expect the Lord's blessing. And you, my brethren, who come up hither, if your closets can testify that you have previously begged of the Lord that your minister might come forth in the power of Elias, in the fulness of gospel blessings, could ye, think you, after such a preparation, join with a hollow formality, in the exercises of prayer and praise, give a careless and distracted attention to the pulpit exercises, and then go empty away without feeling a secret dissatisfaction.

4. The practice of Christian intercession would animate us to more diligence in promoting the benefit of our fellow-men.

If an angel from heaven were to overhear the coldest prayer we ever utter, from an honest interpretation of the language used he might conclude that we were just ripe for the transports of paradise. But we, alas! know the contradiction which subsists between our expressions and feelings, our prayers and our lives. Still, without devotional exercises we should be yet more destitute of holy emotions. The same good effect, we may expect, will follow the practice of praying for others. To pray for the poor, the afflicted, the unconverted, and then be unwilling so much as to lift a finger in their behalf, is a contradiction too gross to be imposed upon ourselves. To commend to the bounteous Giver of all good those sufferers who are now feeling all the sad variety of woe, and yet leave the widow's cruise of oil to be supplied by miracle; to beg that the day-spring from on high may break upon those

who are sitting in the region and very shadow of death, and yet be unwilling to throw our superfluous mite into the missionary treasury, is an imposition too gross to be played off with comfort on our own hearts, deceitful as they are. Intercession will either make us charitable, or avarice will clip the wings of intercession, and thus prevent its lofty soarings. Yet not to stand up with the censer of intercession between the dying and the dead, not to feel, like good old Eli, an anxious interest for the fate of the ark in the contest going on between the powers of light and darkness; not to feel an undissembled charity towards all our brethren and companions in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, who are everywhere scattered abroad through the world; not to do this were at once to relinquish our Christian hopes. Your love of the duty upon which I am insisting is a test of the sincerity of your piety.

One observation more before I quit this topic. A peculiar blessing is promised to those who take much interest in the prosperity of Zion. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, says the Psalmist, *all they shall prosper that love thee.* It has been found by experience that those churches which have done most for the missionary cause have been most remarkably blessed of the Lord. It is worthy of recollection, that in a certain district of the church in this country the tokens of the Holy Spirit's presence had for some years been almost withdrawn. A number of sermons were, by the direction of the Presbytery, preached to excite their attention to the subject of missions, when contrary to expectation, each of those sermons was accompanied by the divine influence and blessing. Let us then be stimulated to the duty of ardent intercession by all those bless-

ings which we may expect it will draw down upon our own souls. These, though great, very great, constitute, however, but a small part of that body of motive which should impel us, like so many Israels, to wrestle with God until he grant us a blessing. That is but a meagre account of the benefits of prayer which restricts them to the good effect which the mere performance of the duty has upon ourselves. This sceptical view of the subject would cut all the nerves of exertion, put out all the fires of devotion. What a farce would it be for me to pray for others, when all that I expected was some benefit for myself! This, my brethren, is not the scriptural doctrine. The testimony of God assures us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. It is exemplified in the case of Elias, who though a man subject to like passions with yourselves, prayed God that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and a half; and he prayed again that it might rain, and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her increase. Let us rest satisfied, then, that our prayers are heard, and if properly offered, will be answered. Let us, then, in the second place, be stirred up to the performance of the duty of intercession, by a view of the blessings we may expect will descend upon others.

The largest and most extensive blessing which can be expected, is the universal spread of knowledge, religion, and happiness. I know, indeed, a species of unbelief is apt to assault the Christian's mind when he approaches so grand a subject. It is not because he considers the moral renovation of the world a work impossible with God. No! The wonders of every spring assure him that he who renews the face of creation can work a not more surprising

change in the hearts of all mankind. Jehovah hath spoken glorious things of Zion, and his word is a firm basis of hope. Let us encourage ourselves by frequently meditating on the glory of the latter days. Summon to your view all those images of delight which sacred description has clustered around those "scenes surpassing fable and yet true." Consider the worth of one immortal soul—of millions of immortal souls. Consider the distance between those depths of misery to which they are exposed, and those heights of heaven to which they may be raised, and then, then I shall not need to *press* upon you the duty of intercession. If ever there was a time when Christians were called upon to send up their united cries to the ear of the Lord of hosts, for the conversion of the world, it is *now; now* that the period for the introduction of the millenial glory is just at hand; *now* that the Church is just beginning to feel its obligations to spread the gospel; *now* that the Lord has in a most glorious manner appeared for the enlargement and prosperity of his kingdom.

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

NATURE OF THAT INABILITY WHICH PREVENTS THE SINNER FROM EMBRACING THE GOSPEL:

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

MONTREAL, DEC. 9, 1827.

Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.—John v. 40.

In connection with

No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.—John vi. 44.

THERE are two leading views in which the subject of man's religious obligation is regarded. The one considers sin as a misfortune which is to be pitied; the other as fault which is to be blamed. The one regards man as unable to comply with God's commands; and therefore not bound to do so. The other regards him as able, but unwilling, and nevertheless bound. The first considers it his duty to do what he can, that is, discharge the social and moral duties of life, control his external deportment, and give a diligent attendance on the ordinances of religion, till

God shall enable him to do more. The second view of the subject, esteeming the precepts of God concerning all things to be right, considers man under unalterable obligations to do whatever he commands, that he has power already conferred on him to do his whole duty, and that while he remains averse to its performance, his praying for assistance is worse than useless. The supporters of the first view, to be consistent, either deny that God commands unrenewed men to be holy, or acknowledging that he does, deem it impossible, and therefore unfair; while the supporters of the second maintain, that the Most High does demand holiness of unholy men, acknowledge the possibility of compliance with the demand, and perceive and insist on its fairness and equity. These several views are held by Calvinistic and orthodox divines, in all branches of the Presbyterian Church, both in the eastern and western hemispheres. Though they may not all push their sentiments quite to the extremes which I have stated, yet every thinking Christian must, and does adopt principles which clearly involve the whole of one or the other of these systems. It need not be said, that the difference between the two is wide: that it is a difference of great practical importance, and one that meets us at almost every turn. It would be prejudging the case, to ask those who are in the habit of reading the Scriptures, which is there presented, but the bare statement of the question informs us which side of it reflects the most blame on the sinner, and the most glory to God: a circumstance which, to an humble mind, affords strong presumptive evidence of the truth.

The whole difference between these schemes, lies in the apprehension of the *nature of that inability, which prevents a sinner from complying with the commands of God.*

The one maintains that it is a *natural* inability, which he *cannot* help; and the other, that it is a *moral* inability, which he *will* not help. If the truth on this point can be satisfactorily ascertained, all the other consequences involved will easily follow, and the correctness of one or the other of the systems be determined. If our investigation should prove successful, I trust that we shall not regret having occupied a portion of this holy day, with the consideration of the subject.

It will be, first of all, necessary to have clear conceptions of the distinction between natural and moral ability. *Natural* or *physical* ability is our *power* to do a thing, which we have by the very constitutions of our *natures*, whether it refer to our mental faculties, or bodily abilities, or our opportunities to use them. *Moral* ability is our *inclination* to do a thing, and is irrespective of our power. This kind of ability is called *moral*, because the inclination is that on which the moral character of the agent, the good and evil of his actions depend. Perhaps a few illustrations may convey a better idea of the distinction, than any definition, however accurate. A man who has the use of his limbs, has natural ability to walk, but he may, from some cause operating on his inclination, be unwilling to move a step. He is now morally unable. Again, he may have a great desire to walk, and not have the use of his limbs. He is, in that case, morally able and naturally unable to walk. When the mariners in the vessel which contained Jonah, rowed hard to bring it to land, but *could not*, it was through a natural inability. When Joseph's brethren hated him so, that they *could not* speak peaceably to him, it was through a moral inability. It is by a natural inability, that a blind man cannot see. It was by a moral inability,

that some of whom an apostle speaks, had "eyes full of adultery, that *could not cease* from sin." A drunkard has natural ability to abstain from spirituous liquors, as well as from any other poison; but when, through strength of appetite, he is unable to forbear, it is a moral inability to abstain. It is an instance of natural inability, that men *cannot* make a hair of their head white or black, or add a cubit to their stature; and of moral inability, that an affectionate child *cannot* wantonly disobey its parents, or a malicious man *cannot* desire the prosperity of his enemy.

Now, though it sound like an inaccuracy, to say, that a man is unable to do what he is merely unwilling to do, yet, through the poverty of human language, it is customary with all persons so to speak. How common is it for a person to say, that he cannot do what he is merely strongly averse to? I tell you to thrust your hand into the fire. You reply that you cannot:—you cannot think of such a thing. Now it is evident, that you have the natural ability to do it. You can move your hand in the direction of the fire, as easily as in any other direction. All you mean by saying you cannot, is that you are strongly averse to it:—in other words, you are morally unable. When you hear a recital of some shameful or cruel conduct, you exclaim, "Oh! *I could not* have acted so:"—not meaning that you have not powers of body and mind, to have perpetrated the atrocity, but that it would have been altogether contrary to your feelings and inclination. In accordance with this method of speaking, so common among men, is the Bible written. Thus the Redeemer said, "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him:"—that is, every one is so strongly averse to coming to me, that he *cannot*, or more strictly, *will* not

come unto me, except the Father draw him, or overcome his repugnance, by the sweet and powerful constraints of his grace. In exact agreement with this interpretation, are the words of him who never uttered an incautious expression, and who was always perfectly consistent with himself: "Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye might have life:" a declaration which in the original, still more emphatically attributes their not coming, to a want of will, than the English auxiliary verb, which generally implies nothing more than the certain futurition of the event:—"Ye are *not willing* to come unto me, that ye might have life."

Having stated and explained the distinction between natural and moral ability, I observe, that the inability which prevents a sinner from embracing the Gospel, must be of one kind or the other, and maintain, that it is of the latter kind,—that all men are naturally able to come to God, and that the only reason why they do not, is that they are morally unable or unwilling to do so.

We are here met at the very outset, with a prejudice against all such distinctions, as a mere metaphysical refinement, which few can understand, and if understood, of no importance; for if men are unable, they are unable, whether it arises from a physical or moral cause. If any choose, he is at liberty to call the distinction nice and metaphysical, but it is a distinction still, which is obvious to every capacity, and whose importance is daily felt in the transactions of society. For instance, if one of your children has broken some valuable article, would it be a metaphysical nicety in you to inquire whether it was an accidental thing, which could not be helped, or whether it was done wantonly and willingly? Does not the very child perceive the distinction? and if he can, will avail himself of it, and never fail to plead that he did

not intend it, and could not help it—and is not this the very distinction between natural and moral ability? Again, when a criminal is arraigned at court for killing a fellow man, is it a matter of too much metaphysical nicety for the jury to inquire whether it was an accident which could not be helped, or a wilful murder which had been freely intended; in other words, whether it preceded from a natural or moral inability to do otherwise?

But the distinction is no less important than it is obvious. Does your child think it is of no importance towards establishing his innocence, and would he not justly complain did you punish him as severely for an oversight, or accident, as for wanton and intentional mischief, and if such were your general procedure, would he not lose all confidence in your justice? And might not the accused at the bar bitterly complain of the judge, who should refuse to make such a distinction, by saying, that if the man was killed, he was killed, and it would not alter the event, to determine whether it was done voluntarily, or accidentally? And why should it be deemed of no importance to ascertain whether men's continuance in sin be from a natural inability, a cause which they cannot help, or from a moral inability which they will not help? Men indeed continue in sin, whether the cause be of a natural or moral kind; but is the distinction of no importance towards determining their guilt? No man who thinks at all, can think so. Sinners do, without exception, perceive the bearing of the question, and when urged with the immediate obligation of duty, attempt to fasten the blame of non-compliance upon their natural inability. They perceive, that if it can be shown to proceed from their moral inability or unwillingness, that they are stripped of every cloak for their sin. They are quick to

discern that the distinction forces upon them an irresistible conviction of guilt, which they would gladly avoid. So long as they can excuse themselves by throwing the blame on something beyond their control, they rest easy. Hence that rooted aversion to the doctrine, which must have forcibly struck the mind of every one who has conversed much with impenitent persons on the subject of their personal obligations. Hence their unwillingness to admit a truth, which shows their hiding place to be a refuge of lies. But they *must* see it if they are ever to be brought to a state of conviction. Of such deep and practical importance is the doctrine. I know of none more so. Without it, I should be perfectly unable to justify the ways of God to man. I should feel myself in the situation of one of Pharaoh's taskmasters; and rather than hear the keen retort, "There is no straw given unto thy servants to make brick," and be sensible that it was well founded, I would resign the service. Without it, I should not know how to acquit the ever-blessed God of being a hard master, gathering where he had not strewed, and reaping where he had not sown.

We will now attend to the evidence, which directly proves that men have natural ability perfectly to love and obey God, and comply with the gospel.

I argue it from the fact that *God has commanded it.* It will not be doubted that the Supreme Lawgiver enjoins men to love him with all their heart, with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength, and their neighbor as themselves; that he commands all men every where, to repent, and return to him with their whole heart; that he commands them to believe the gospel under pain of damnation, and to be holy, even as he is holy, and to have holy and new hearts, that is, to be in the possession of holy feel-

ings, without delay. "Circumcise yourselves," says he, "and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Jerusalem, and inhabitants of Judah." "O Jerusalem! wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." "Cast away your transgressions, whereby ye offend, and *make you a new heart and a new spirit*, for why will ye die?" "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*." "*Rend your hearts*, and not your garments," "*purify your hearts*, ye double minded." "And this is his commandment; that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another." To these might be added a vast many other passages, indeed all the precepts of scripture which enjoin holiness in general, or some of its particular branches. Now I appeal to you, whether God will ever command what it is impossible for men to perform. Can you for a moment suppose, that the Judge of all the earth will require of men what is beyond their strength, and that under the penalty of his everlasting displeasure? Then, indeed, are the complaints which sinners make against the Most High, for the strictness of his law, well-founded. And can you believe that men are in the right, and Jehovah's conduct infinitely in the wrong? "Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity!" "What shall we say then? is there unrighteousness with him? God forbid! yea, let God be true, and every man a liar." Whatever be the consequence, we will, with Elihu, "ascribe righteousness to our Maker." We are now prepared to see the force of the following argument.

God will not command what men are unable to perform.

But he does command men to love him, repent, and embrace the gospel.

Therefore men are able to love him, repent, and embrace the gospel.

There are two ways in which men attempt to evade the force of this reasoning. The first is, that we originally *had the ability in Adam, that we lost it in him, and that God's right to command, still continues, notwithstanding our inability to obey.*

In answer to this objection, I would first state, that I have no disposition to deny that Adam's conduct—the scriptures have not explained *how*, nor have any of their expositors succeeded in becoming wise above what is written—*somehow* involved us in very important consequences. It has brought us into that state in which every human being is born, and grows up unless sovereign grace interpose, with a heart opposed to his duty and to God. But it cannot with propriety be affirmed, that the fall has deprived us of power to keep the commands of God. If it has, then our probation and responsibility came to an end in Adam, and there is no such thing as *actual sin* in the world. If we lost our power to obey in our first parent, then our probation and responsibility came to an end in him. I do not know of any principle plainer, than that accountability is founded on power to obey; or of any more absurd, than that a creature incapable of acting should be put on probation. That natural ability is the foundation of responsibility, is evident from the fact every where taught in the word of God, that the increase of natural ability confers a proportional increase of responsibility. He who receives five talents, has five times the responsibility of him who receives but one. "The servant

who knows his master's will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin." If an increase of responsibility follows an increase of power, then some degree of power is necessary to constitute the commencement of responsibility. But if we lost all our power in Adam, we have no responsibility. Does not God, however, still deem us accountable, and does he not declare, that the welfare of our eternity shall be determined by our *own present* conduct? Nay, does he not lay the whole stress on our own personal character, and can it be shown that any one was ever lost for Adam's sin?

Again, if we lost in Adam all power to obey, there is no such thing as actual transgression in the world. For the loss of power takes away all capacity for sinning. As sin is a breach of obligation, and obligation is founded on power, there can be no sin where there is no power. If we had power in Adam, we were then responsible and capable of sinning. If that power was destroyed in his transgression, we thenceforth became forever incapable of actual transgression, and there has been no sin committed in the world since our common ancestor plucked the forbidden fruit. You perceive the absurdity involved in the supposition. This throwing the fault on the transgression of Adam, is only reviving a proverb for which God so severely reproved the Jews. "Our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge." Has not God decided the question, by saying, "All souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also, the soul of the son is mine? The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness

of the righteous shall be upon him; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

That present ability is the only ground of present obligation to keep the commands of God, may be further illustrated in this manner. Upon the declaration of war, a citizen mutilates his person, in order that he may not be draughted on military service. Now the man deserves to be punished, to the full extent of his guilt, for incapacitating himself for the service of his country. But after he has become mutilated, it would not be right to require of him the service of an able-bodied man, and punish him for not rendering it. He deserves punishment for cutting off his foot, for instance; but it would be tyrannical to require him to walk after it was cut off. In like manner, if Adam when he first sinned, deliberately deprived himself and all his posterity of the power of future obedience, for *that* sin he richly deserved to be punished; but it would not be equitable to require any further obedience of him. For the one act by which he destroyed his power to walk in the ways of obedience, he is to blame; but he is not to blame for not walking in them after he has lost the power. It is evident, however, that God did require obedience of Adam after his fall, and that he does still require holy obedience of his fallen descendants, which upon every principle of equity, proves that, though they have lost the will to obey, they did not lose the power, on which every just command is founded.

The second way in which men evade the force of the argument for natural ability, as it is inferred from the commands of God, is by saying, *that though we are not able to obey, God has promised to give strength to those who ask him.* They maintain that the character of God

is cleared from the imputation of commanding an impossibility, by the promise of supernatural strength to those who ask it of him.

To this evasion I have four objections, each of which to my mind appears substantial. In the first place, it *mistakes the nature of that strength which the grace of God confers*. The influences of the Spirit do not communicate any new physical strength to the faculties of the mind. Sin does not consist in a weak understanding, or memory, or judgment; nor does grace strengthen any old faculty, or communicate any new one. It merely leads to a right use of what is already possessed. It inclines its subject to do what he was previously able to do. A person after conversion has no better talents, and no other powers of body or mind, than what he had while unconverted. But this he has—he has a different disposition, a new inclination to lay himself out for the glory of God. The evasion then is incorrect in stating that man stands in need of, and asking shall receive, that which the grace of God never confers, viz., new natural ability for the performance of duty.

In the second place, the evasion is objectionable, inasmuch as it *involves the contradiction of supposing that the sinner does that in order to obtain grace, which it is morally impossible for him to do until he first have grace.* It supposes that before he can repent he must pray for grace, while it is certain that he cannot pray for grace without having first repented. What does the asking for grace mentioned in the evasion mean? A mere utterance of the words of prayer? That surely will not be pretended. Or does it mean the acceptable prayer of sincerity and faith?

But that prayer is never offered by the unrenewed man, nor can it be while he continues such. The evasion sup-

poses God to have given a law which man cannot keep without grace, that grace is only to be obtained by prayer, and yet prayer always pre-supposes grace! It attributes to God the conduct of one who should command a man without legs to walk, and then upon his complaining of the command on account of his inability, to alleviate his situation, should command him to walk to him, and he would then give him the power of walking!

In the third place, I object to the evasion that if it be true that a man cannot repent without supernatural strength, and that this can only be obtained by asking God for it, *that the only thing which the sinner is bound to do is to ask;* that the whole of his duty is narrowed down to that one act. He is not bound to repent before he asks, for upon the supposition he is unable; nor is he bound after he asks, for if God hears his prayer, he already repents, and if God does not hear his prayer, he cannot help it. But I need not inquire, whether the duty of prayer is the only duty enjoined in the scriptures.

In the fourth place, I object to the evasion as *derogatory to the character of God, and subversive of the nature of grace.* It supposes the Supreme to have given a law which men cannot keep, and then to clear himself, promises grace to help them out. It makes the divine procedure like that of a king who should levy a tax beyond the resources of his subjects, and should then justify himself by permitting them to draw on the royal treasury enough to satisfy the demand. Such a procedure is no less subversive of the character of grace. The very term *grace* implies that it is purely gratuitous, and might be justly withheld. But if grace be *necessary* to obedience, then justice obliges God to confer it, and grace is no more grace, but a mere debt.

It still remains true, for aught that has yet appeared to the contrary, that the sinner has power to love God, repent, and embrace the gospel, according to the commandments of the Most High. This truth is confirmed by many positive texts of scripture, which attribute the impenitence of sinners, not to a want of ability, but to a want of inclination, or the depravity of the will. "Oh foolish people, and without understanding, which *have eyes, and see not*, which *have ears, and hear not.*" "Son of man! thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious people, which *have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house.*" "Bring forth the *blind* people that *have eyes*, and the *deaf* that *have ears.*" "They are like the deaf adder that *stoppeth her ears*, which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers charming never so wisely." "Those mine enemies, that *would not* that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men *love* darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. *For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.*" "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not.*" "Ye *will not* come unto me, that ye might have life." All these authorities ascribe the sinner's impenitence to a voluntary disinclination, and not to a want of ability. But here we shall be told, that there is another class of texts which assert his positive disability; such as these: "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "How *can* ye, being evil, speak good things?" "How *can* ye

believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only?" "Having eyes full of adultery, which *cannot* cease from sin."

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The remarks already made have given us a clue, I trust, to the meaning of such passages, which must be interpreted in accordance with the other texts already adduced, as the Bible nowhere contradicts itself. When the Redeemer says, "no man *can* come unto me," he himself interprets it by saying "ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life." Instances without number may be adduced from the inspired volume, in which the word *cannot* is used to denote nothing more than a strong disinclination. "Haste thee, escape thither," said the angel to Lot, "for I *cannot* do anything till thou be come thither."

"The tabernacle of the Lord and the altar of burnt-offering were at Gibeon; but David *could* not go before it to inquire of the Lord, for he was *afraid*, because of the sword of the angel of the Lord." "*Can* that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?" "My iniquities have taken hold of me, so that I am *not able* to look up." "I am so troubled that I *cannot* speak." "The Lord hath spoken, who *can* but prophesy?" "This is a hard saying, who *can* hear it?" Joseph's brethren hated him, and "*could not* speak peaceably unto him."

But are not sinners compared to dry bones—very dry in the valley of vision? Can any thing more fully express an entire destitution of power and life? And natural men are said too, to be "dead in trespasses and sins," and what power can be attributed to the dead? Upon a

little reflection, all this admits of a very satisfactory lucidation. Sinners are as destitute of every holy feeling and every gracious emotion, as the dry and scattered bones of those who have been long dead are of every vestige of animation, and can no more be renewed and sanctified by any application of the means than that crumbling skeletons should hearken to the prophet's call and awaken into life. In like manner, to be dead in trespasses and sins, is to be destitute of all the vitality of holiness, not to be wanting in capacity for holy duties. Their capacity is implied in the exhortation, "O dry bones! hear the word of the Lord," and in the call to the unconverted, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Being *dead in sin*, necessarily implies being *alive to sin*, and the exercise of those faculties and powers which employed in a different way would be a new life unto righteousness.

There is yet another objection to the doctrine of man's having all necessary ability to obey God, which will arise in the minds of some in this form. "It cannot be that I have ability to love and obey God; for I know I have the will, and yet I do it not. If I have wished for any thing, I have wished that I might repent and believe, but still I find I cannot. Though I have sincerely desired it, and made many earnest endeavors after it, I am still as far from believing and repenting as ever." Correct conceptions of the nature of the desires and endeavors of the unrenewed would effectually show you that this plea is ill-founded. This subject has never been set in a clearer light than by President Edwards, in his Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will. I will quote a part of what he says in the fifth section of the third part of that work.

"1. What is here supposed, is a great mistake and gross absurdity; even that men may sincerely choose and desire those spiritual duties of love, acceptance, choice, rejection, &c. consisting in the will itself, or in the disposition and inclination of the heart; and yet not be able to perform or exert them. This is absurd, because it is absurd to suppose that a man should directly, properly, and sincerely incline to have an inclination, which is at the same time contrary to his inclination; for that is to suppose him inclined to that which he is not inclined to. If a man, in the state and acts of his will and inclination, does properly and directly fall in with those duties, he therein performs them; for the duties themselves consist in that very thing: they consist in the state and acts of the will being so formed and directed. If the soul properly and sincerely falls in with a certain proposed act of the will or choice, the soul therein makes that choice its own. Even as when a moving body falls in with a proposed direction of its motion, that is the same thing as to move in that direction.

"2. That which is called a *desire* and *willingness* for those inward duties, in such as do not perform them, has respect to those duties only indirectly and remotely, and is improperly represented as a willingness for them, not only because it respects those good volitions only in a distant view and with respect to future time; but also because evermore not these things themselves, but something else that is foreign and alien, is the object that terminates their volitions and designs.

"A drunkard who continues in his drunkenness, being under the power of a love and violent appetite to strong drink, and without any love to virtue; but being also extremely covetous and close, and very much exercised and

grieved at the diminution of his estate, and the prospect of poverty, may in a sort *desire* the virtue of temperance; and though his present will is to gratify his extravagant appetite, yet he may have a wish to forbear future acts of intemperance, and forsake his excesses, through an unwillingness to part with his money: but still goes on with his drunkenness: his wishes and endeavors are insufficient and ineffectual; such a man has no proper, direct, and sincere willingness to forsake his vice, and the vicious deeds that belong to it; for he acts voluntarily in continuing to drink to excess: his desire is very improperly termed a willingness to be temperate; it is no true desire of that virtue; for it is not virtue that terminates his wishes; nor have they any direct respect at all to it. It is only *the saving his money*, and avoiding poverty, that terminates and exhausts the whole strength of his desire. The virtue of temperance is regarded only very indirectly and improperly, even as a necessary means of gratifying the vice of covetousness.

"So a man of an exceeding corrupt and wicked heart, who has no love to God and Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, being very profanely and carnally inclined, has the greatest distaste of the things of religion, and enmity against them; yet being of a family that from one generation to another, have most of them died in youth, and of an hereditary consumption, and so, having little hope of living long; and having been instructed in the necessity of supreme love to Christ, and gratitude for his death and sufferings, in order to his salvation from eternal misery; if, under these circumstances, he should, through fear of eternal torments, wish he had such a disposition; but his profane and carnal heart remaining, he continues still in his habitual distaste of, and enmity to God and religion, and wholly

without any exercise of that love and gratitude, (as doubtless the very devils themselves, notwithstanding all the devilishness of their temper, would wish for a holy heart, if by that means they could get out of hell:) in this case, there is no sincere willingness to love Christ, and choose him as his chief good: these holy dispositions and exercises are not at all the direct object of the will: they truly share no part of the inclination or desire of the soul; but all is terminated on deliverance from torment; and these graces and pious volitions, notwithstanding this forced consent, are looked upon as undesirable, as when a sick man desires a dose he greatly abhors to save his life."

From this it clearly appears, that you have never really desired holiness, for which you have had no more than an indirect wish, as a necessary means of escaping hell. The apprehension of misery is all that excites your anxiety, and should a new revelation from heaven assure you, that the mouth of the pit was for ever closed, your religious solicitude would be effectually allayed, and your desires for holiness completely gone. That you have had such desires, and with such feelings have made earnest endeavors, and still continue unholy, is a matter of no surprise, and can never be adduced as a just argument to disprove that a holy inclination is all that is wanting to make you holy, and that of course you have the natural ability to be holy.

There is another and last objection to this doctrine which I shall briefly notice. It is this. If no man ever did, if no man ever will become holy without the supernatural influences of the Spirit, how can it be said with any propriety, that men have the natural ability to become holy of themselves?

I answer by asking what it is that makes the influences

of the Spirit necessary in any case? Is it that men have no natural faculties or power to obey God? or is it because they are averse of their own accord to use them;—an aversion so strong that it will never give way, till the Almighty Spirit makes them willing;—an aversion so universal, that no one ever has or will exist without it? I leave you to judge now, whether it be a fair inference, that because all men are thus obstinately unwilling to do their duty, that therefore no man is able to do it. The fact that every one who becomes a Christian, becomes such by the influences of the Spirit, does not touch the question of man's natural power, but only proves the universality of this unwillingness—a truth which is not in dispute.

Having thus proved, I trust, that all men have natural ability to obey God, and that the only reason why they do not, is purely voluntary, in short, is their unwillingness: and having answered such objections to the doctrine, as I am acquainted with, I proceed to deduce and illustrate a few practical inferences.

I remark,

1. That, if men have power to obey God, *the want of a disposition to do so, is no excuse for disobedience*, and therefore that God may justly condemn them for want of a right disposition. Very frequently, when sinners are urged to the duties of repentance, faith, and love to God, they plead that they have no heart for them, and leave us to infer that they are not to blame for their impenitence, because God has not given them a different heart. My object under this head of remark, is to show the perfect futility of this common plea.

The Most High never blames for the want of talents which he has not given, nor requires the improvement of

talents which he has not given. But a talent entrusted lays a foundation for the obligation to improve it, and gives God a right to demand its improvement. The natural ability which he confers on men, when he endows them with all the qualifications for moral agency, constitutes a good reason why they should employ that ability in a right manner, that is, as the Creator commands. If men have power to obey, their want of inclination to do so, is no manner of reason why they should be excused from it. But it has been proved that men have power to obey; and the inference is, that their want of disposition to do so, is not only no excuse, but the very ground of their condemnation;—an inference so clear, that it would seem superfluous to add any thing further, were it not daily denied by saints and sinners, when they urge their want of a different heart, as an excuse for not acting differently. But the principle is not acknowledged in the intercourse of human society, where the mere want of disposition is never considered a valid plea for the non-performance of duty. If a subject rebels against his king, it will not avail him, that he never had and never would feel right towards him. His disloyal and treasonable disposition is the ground of his condemnation. If a servant who is in health and fully able to work, refuses to be industrious, will his master consider it any excuse, that he says he does not love to work, and feels too indolent for labor? If a child plead a want of love and respect for his parent, as a reason for his undutiful and disobedient conduct, will his parent on that ground absolve him from his filial obligations? No more is it reasonable for a sinner to expect that our heavenly King, Master, and Father, will release him from his obligations to obedience, because he has no disposition to obey.

Again, if a want of disposition to obey, is any excuse for disobedience, God has no right to punish any creature for transgression. The moment any holy being sins, he loses his disposition to obey, and whenever he is called to an account, may plead his want of disposition to obey, and if that plea be valid, the Supreme Lawgiver has nothing more to say to him. He must let him pass with impunity. And then upon this principle, whenever a being sins, he places himself beyond the reach of justice! And then upon this principle, if the whole moral universe of God should rebel against him this moment, they would effectually place themselves beyond the obligations of his law, and the control of his government! For they could all then plead a want of disposition. Upon this principle, the Judge of all can never call an offender to a reckoning, and all the penalties in his law denounced against transgression, are mere empty threatenings. This monstrous principle at once strikes at the foundations of Jehovah's throne, and denies his right to reign at all. And yet it is involved in the excuse perpetually urged by men, that they have no disposition to do better that they do.

Again, if the excuse be at all valid, the more sinful a man becomes, the less deserving is he of punishment. For if a disinclination to duty is a reason why one should not be punished for its neglect, then a stronger disinclination is a stronger reason why one should not be punished for its neglect; and thus as the disinclination increases in strength, does the excuse increase in its validity. But if to feel a disinclination for duty is sinful, a stronger disinclination is more deeply sinful. And if the stronger the disinclination, the more valid the excuse, then the more deeply sinful, the more valid the excuse, that is, the

more deeply sinful a man becomes, the less deserving is he of condemnation.

Again, if God has not a right to demand a holy disposition of those who have it not, he has no right to demand anything of them. For he has no right to demand natural ability, or power, of them which he has not communicated—talents, which he has not entrusted. Nor will it be said, that it would be right for him to demand wickedness, or an unholy disposition. The only other thing which is left which he can demand, is holiness, or a holy heart, and if he may not justly demand *that* of those who have it not, (which if the excuse be valid he may not,) then the Most High has absolutely no right to demand any thing of the sinner.

Again, if this excuse be a good one, there is no such thing as sin in the world. For all sin may be reduced to a want of right disposition, and if men are not to blame for this, they are not to blame for anything, and there is no blame-worthy creature in existence.

Again, in offering this excuse, sinners necessarily condemn the ever-blessed God. Like the unprofitable servant who hid his master's talent, they come into his presence and say, "Lord! I knew thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed." In presenting this excuse, you throw all the blame on God. For he *does* demand your heart, though you have no disposition to give it him, and he threatens you with endless misery if you do not comply. Now if your excuse is good, God is requiring what is not right, nay he is doing you an infinite wrong, in threatening infinite woe. With all this, you by implication charge him, in your self-justifying pleas, and all this is

true, if your plea is well founded. Oh! sinner, do you consider what blame your guilty excuses are heaping upon your Maker? They will be all rolled back upon you by an Almighty arm, and will fall with an overwhelming weight and crush you, if not repented of while yet you are in the way with your adversary.

Again, you never accept such a plea from another when you are the party injured, and self-love does not blind you. When a fellow creature distresses and hates you, you do not deem him excused because he pleads that he has no right disposition towards you. And what reason can you assign why God should accept such a plea from you? Nay, there are moments in which conscience, that will be no longer silenced, speaks out and condemns you for doing things, although when you did them, you had no disposition to do otherwise. The rake who is overtaken with shame, poverty, and disease, bitterly condemns himself, although in his career of licentiousness he had no disposition to do otherwise. The convicted sinner condemns himself, when he sees the fatal consequences of transgression, though at the time of his disobedience, he had no disposition to do otherwise. The sons of Jacob, after they had abused their brother Joseph; Pharaoh, after he had persisted in refusing to emancipate the Israelities; Saul, after he had spared the Amalekites; and Judas, after he had betrayed innocent blood; all condemned themselves for their conduct, although at the time of it, they had no disposition to act in a different manner. And all sinners, sooner or later, either when the light of conviction shall pour upon their hearts in this world, or the light of eternity break upon their vision in the next, perceiving the falseness of their plea, and themselves stripped of every excuse

and condemned, shall bitterly lament that they ever attempted to make one. Far better acknowledge your guilt at once, nor longer try to fortify yourselves against a sense of blame. So long as you succeed in soothing your consciences with the belief that you can in any way be excused for the want of holiness, you are proof against conviction of guilt. So long as you cover yourself with the shield of self-justification, the arrows of the Most Mighty, who kills to make alive, and who wounds to heal, will never reach your heart. So long as your hearts are disposed to break his bands asunder, and cast the cords of his obligations from you, he that sitteth in the heavens will laugh at your folly, and vex you in his sore displeasure. Throw your bosom open then, to a sense of your inexcusable guilt. Be willing to see yourselves as you are, and acknowledge what you see. Like self-condemned traitors, tie the halter about your necks with your own hands, and then go and throw yourselves upon the mercy of the King, before a legal investigation shall extort the confession of treasonable guilt, and the redemption of your souls cease forever.

The doctrine of man's natural ability has been made to bear upon the case of the unconverted sinner. It has been shewn that, possessing power to obey, his want of inclination admits of no possible excuse. It remains to show that it has an equal bearing upon the case of the converted saint. God not only commands that the sinner should repent and embrace the gospel, but that the saint should be perfectly holy, and so far as he comes short of it he is inexcusable on the same ground that the unreconciled sinner is inexcusable. Natural ability to perform our whole duty is the basis of the sinner's obligation to repent and be

perfectly holy, and of the obligation of the saint, who has repented, to be perfectly holy. And the only reason why no one on earth, either saint or sinner, is perfectly holy, is that no one on earth has a perfect inclination to be holy. The difference between a renewed person and an unrenewed, is that the one has a partial inclination to be holy, and that the other has no inclination at all. The difference between a saint upon earth and a saint in heaven is, that the one has a partial inclination to be holy, and the other has a perfect inclination to be so. Now as saints and sinners possess the same natural ability to be holy, the saint is no more excusable for his varying and imperfect inclination than the sinner is for his total want of a right inclination. The servant who works lazily in his master's employment is reprehensible on the same ground, though not to the same extent, with the servant who will not work at all. And yet many Christian persons speak and feel as though they were not aware of this. They look back upon the days of their unregeneracy, and heartily condemn their character as inexcusable, but see but little guilt in not being now vastly more holy than they are. They reason much like the impenitent, when they speak of the strength of their corruptions as something which they cannot help, and excuse themselves in the want of more intensely holy feelings, because God has not given them larger measures of his grace. Now they are blameworthy, not merely on the ground that their careless walk and indevotion have deprived them of the larger effusions of the Spirit, which remedy the wrong disposition of the heart, but on the broader basis of their natural ability, which at all times obliges them as accountable creatures, not merely to be partially, but perfectly holy. Hence ought the children of God to feel that they should

be perfect even as their Father in heaven is perfect, that every degree of short-coming, as it does not arise from a want of power, but of disposition, is inexcusable; that God has a right to demand their perfection on the ground of their ability, without giving the influences of his Spirit; that such is their guilty disinclination to perfect holiness that it never will be overcome, except by the sovereign and almighty power of the Spirit; and that all their desires after perfect holiness, so long as they are not perfectly holy, like the sinner's desires after repentance, are not proper, direct, and sincere.

I remark,

2. That if men possess natural ability to do and to be all that God requires, it follows that they are not passive in regeneration.

The common opinion, that depravity consists in a depraved heart, existing anterior to depraved feelings; that it is a constitutional and physical depravity independent of our will; and that regeneration, which remedies it, is a miraculous creation of a new nature, from which holy feelings spring, the production of a new faculty which the sinner never possessed before, and the infusion of a new principle which must be possessed in order to render him capable of holy feelings, is inconsistent with the doctrine of man's natural ability to do all that God requires; or shall we not rather say, that the doctrine of man's natural ability is subversive of such an idea of his passivity in regeneration? God commands men to make them new hearts and a new spirit. He makes it their duty to be regenerate. And men have natural ability to do and to be all that God commands. But if regeneration be the creation of a new physical faculty, an operation in which man is passive, he

has no ability to be regenerate. Nay, if God requires that of us in which we are *passive*, he requires *nothing* of us. He requires that we should be *acted upon*, not that *we should act*. But it is evident, that the prevalent idea of passivity in regeneration quite mistakes the nature of that change. It attributes moral character to something which exists anterior to the voluntary, active exercises of the soul, for which alone conscience and scripture declare us responsible. Again, all that the divine law requires is love. "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "The fruit of the Spirit is love." To make a new heart, then, means nothing more than to exercise holy love. And is a man passive in the exercise of holy love? This view of the subject is agreeable to the experience of all who have ever become regenerate. They are not conscious of the creation of any new power, of the infusion of any new principle in which they were passive, but are merely sensible of the exercise of new holy feelings, which they know indeed they would never, if left to themselves, have chosen to exercise, but in which they were as voluntary and active as in any unholy feelings they ever exercised. They act in being acted upon. It cannot be shewn in what respect the first holy exercise differs from any of the subsequent ones, except in its being the first. And if a saint is active in all his subsequent holy exercises of mind, what reason can be assigned why he is not in the first? The same power which began must perpetuate holiness in his heart, and as the saint is active in perpetuated holiness, so is he active in commencing holiness.

Again, if men are naturally able to do their whole duty, nothing but their unwillingness keeps them from it. If they were willing, if they had holy inclinations, their duty would be performed, and the first exercise of these would

be their regeneration; but is it not evident that they would be active in this? Is a man passive in willing to be holy, or in holy inclinations? Men are not bound to possess the influences of the Spirit of God, for them they cannot command. They are dispensed in uncontrollable sovereignty. But they are bound to possess those holy feelings which that Spirit produces. They are bound to have new hearts, that is, holiness. So long as men think that regeneration is some miraculous operation in which they are passive, and necessarily must be wrought by an agent which they cannot command; so long, in short, as the new heart is supposed to be any thing besides the first exercise of holy feelings, men will deny their natural ability to be holy, repel all exhortations to be converted, and never feel the force of the obligation to make them new hearts and a new spirit.

I remark,

3. If sinners are naturally able to comply with their duty, and yet unwilling to do it, we are furnished with a satisfactory reconciliation of those passages of scripture which speak of repentance, faith, and love, as *man's duty*, with those passages which speak of them as *God's gift*. It explains the consistency of man's being in some places commanded to make them new hearts, and the new heart being in other places said to be the work of the Spirit and gift of God.

In the first place, men by the very possession of natural ability, are laid under obligations to be holy. The natural talents with which God has entrusted them they *ought* to improve by the exercise of holy affections. And what they ought to do, God has a right to command them to do. It is therefore right in God to command men to love him, to

repent, and believe in Christ. Their power to do so lays them under obligations to do so, from which they can in no wise be excused. And hence the propriety of speaking of love, repentance, and faith, as *man's duty*, and urging him to its immediate performance. But in the next place, though this is man's duty, he is obstinately unwilling to do it, and that is his depravity. Urge him to do it, ply him with all the inducements which the whole magazine of truth affords, and in all the ways which the whole system of means can present them, and he will refuse. The wicked will continue to do wickedly. Though Christ most tenderly invites him, he will not go unto him that he might have life. Now God, who sees him in this guilty frame of mind, perceives that he can, by the almighty influence of his Spirit upon the heart, remove his obstinacy, and make him willing to love, repent, and believe; and when he does it, he is said to *give* him love, repentance, and faith. But is it not clear, that what God has given him he was bound of himself to have, and that the exercises of love, repentance, and faith, which are God's gift, were his duty before God gave them? And it would have been right to have urged him to relinquish his obstinacy, before God subdued him by his grace, and made him willing in the day of his power, and if God had never done so, it would still have been his unalterable duty to be willing. Hence we see the propriety of exhorting sinners to repentance and holiness of heart, for they are bound to it independently of the grace of God, while another portion of revealed truth assures us, that if they ever do repent and become holy, it will be in consequence of repentance given, and holiness communicated by the sovereign and free Spirit of God. Hence we see the reason why God, as a *moral governor*, invariably demands holiness, and in

some instances, as a *sovereign*, confers it. Thus is it consistent in him to urge all sinners to make them new hearts, and in some instances to give them new hearts. Thus is what in all cases is man's duty; in some cases, God's gift.

I remark,

4. That if men have natural ability to embrace the gospel, and are not willing to do it, the destruction of the non-elect is to be attributed entirely to themselves.

It has been constantly urged by the supporters of Arminianism, that if none *possibly can* embrace the gospel, but those on whom a sovereign God confers his grace, then the rest of mankind, the non-elect, are placed under a hard and invincible necessity of being forever lost. And the objection is unanswerable. If such be the condition of the non-elect, all the reasoning and scripture in the world cannot silence the irrepressible dictates of common sense. If those on whom God does not intend, and therefore does not bestow his grace, have no power to embrace the gospel, then it is hard that they should perish for not embracing it. It is to no purpose to say that they are justly condemned for their trangression of the law, and had no right to expect that God should ever provide a Saviour, or place pardon within their reach. The whole of this is granted. If indeed the non-elect are treated as the mere transgressors of the law, and never having had mercy offered, die without the guilt of its rejection, it must be allowed there is no injustice done them. They justly perish like the devils, without excuse, and without the offer of pardon. But is this a scriptural view of their situation, at least of those of them who perish amidst the light of the gospel? Is not the word of this salvation which was

commanded to be preached to every creature sent to them also? Are they not the prisoners of hope as well as others? The word which Christ spoke, shall that not judge them, and are they not condemned for not receiving the gospel? And how can we answer him who inquires into the equity of condemning the non-elect for not doing what they have no power to do? The objection, I repeat it, is unanswerable. So long as the natural inability of the sinner is maintained, the Arminian may strike a blow at the vitals of Calvinism which no skill can parry. It was this unfounded idea of the sinner's impotence in every sense, held by Hill, Toplady, and others, in the famous controversy which took place in Great Britain about the middle of the last century, which gave such an advantage to Wesley, Fletcher, and other coadjutors, when they appealed to the equitable feelings of mankind. While the former founded the doctrine of sovereign and unconditional election upon indisputable testimonies of the word of God, they connected it with a view of human ability so subversive of justice, that the latter, thinking that the *doctrine* and the *view* must stand or fall together, and seeing the horrid consequences of the view, soon persuaded themselves that the doctrine was not contained in any of those texts in which it is so incontrovertibly declared. Instead of maintaining that no man possibly can embrace the gospel without the grace of God, had the friends of election maintained to a *certainty no man will* believe without the influence of the Spirit, and that his impenitence and unbelief arise from no obstacle but an obstinate and voluntary rejection of mercy and aversion to holiness, there had not probably been made a breach, great like the sea, which has not been healed to this day. It would then

have been seen that an interest in the great salvation is placed within the reach of all; that men, in rejecting it, are not controlled by an impossibility or fatality, but *choose* death, *become the authors of their own destruction*, and are justly condemned; and it would then have been admitted by all the truly pious, that though all continue to reject salvation with a desperate obstinacy, God has power to remove that obstinacy, and can make them willing in the day of power without destroying or interfering with the freedom of their will, and that he has a right to exercise that power on whom he chooses, according to the good pleasure of his will, and that the discrimination does no injury to those who are passed by. The inference would then have appeared easy to most of those who now hold contrary views, that what God does he must have intended to do, and that if it is right for God, in time, to bestow on some that grace which he might justly have withheld from all, then it was right in God from eternity to make that selection and design to confer that grace.

I remark,

5. If men possess natural ability to turn to God, and nothing prevents them but their unwillingness, then it is a wicked thing in them to be waiting God's time, till he shall by the influences of the Spirit turn them.

It follows, that the moment you know your duty, you are bound to perform it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." To continue in the neglect of duty, when no impediment stands in the way, I need not say, is wicked. But how much more wicked is it to neglect it for such reasons, and with such feelings as these! "I know that it is my duty to love and obey God, and that it is reasonable and proper that I

should. But I am determined not to do so, until God, the Holy Spirit, shall, at some time, overpower my repugnance, and make me do it. He can do it, if he pleases, as he has done to many unwilling sinners besides myself. I will, therefore, wait his own time. I will continue to offend him, till he conquers me by his grace. I will prolong my ungodly contest with him, till he makes me drop my weapons. And if his time should never come, if he never subdues my obstinancy in the day of his power, I will continue his enemy till I die." Now this is, by fair construction, the feeling of those who are unwilling to turn to God, and are waiting for God's time to turn them, by the irresistible influences of his Spirit. It may be presenting the subject in a little more glaring and obvious light, than you have been wont to view it. But it is all involved in a willingness to neglect religion, until you can no longer help attending to it; in your intention to continue impenitent, till God shall arise in his power, and break, and subdue, and change your heart. And what, my friend, if God's time should never come? What, if God's time should never come? Are you willing to risk the welfare of your eternity upon the certainty of such an event? This thing is certain, that God's time will never come, while you continue to think as you do. It will never come until you feel that you cannot defer your duty any longer, until the pressing conviction is urged upon your mind, that "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Now *is* God's accepted time;—the only time that you may ever know. "To-day, then, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." And will you still maintain the controversy with your Maker, by pleading that you have *no natural ability* to obey. No! you can-

not do that, as long as God is just, and commands obedience; as long as the Scriptures are true, and attribute your impenitence to a voluntary and chosen disinclination, and not to a want of power. Or, acknowledging your natural ability to obey, will you still plead your *want of disposition* as a sufficient excuse? What! plead that as an excuse which is never accepted in human society;—an excuse which denies God the right to punish any creature upon his revolt against his government;—an excuse which would prove that the more sinful you become, the less deserving of punishment;—which virtually denies God's right to demand any thing of his creatures; an excuse which would disprove the existence of any moral evil in the universe;—an excuse which carries with it the highest impeachment of the divine equity;—one which you would reject with indignation, were it offered you by a fellow-creature; one which, in the lucid intervals of your moral perception, you cannot accept from yourself;—and one too which persisted in will be ruinous, by precluding you from all conviction of guilt, and is incompatible with that feeling of self-condemnation, which must precede the extension of mercy towards you? And do you now say, that a conviction that your excuse is inexcusable, does not alter your disposition? that you still have no heart to repent, and how can you? What, now, let me ask, would you think of a child, who, after he had wantonly and impudently offended his parent, and that aggrieved parent had come, and told him to be sorry for what he had done, should reply that he did not feel like it, that he had no heart to repent:—would you not think that he was adding obstinacy to insult? And when the parent should still urge upon him the obligation to repent, he should plead

his impenitent disposition as an excuse, and inquire how he was to get a better spirit, would you not say he was bound to have a better spirit, that his urging such an excuse, and asking such a question, was only evidence of the continuance of his depraved inclination, that the plea was futile and aggravating, and only added insult to obstinacy? In a manner exactly similar are you acting towards God, and in a similar light does he regard your self-justification. But you say you offer no excuse—"I am convinced that I am guilty and inexcusable, that my very plea might justly be made the ground of my condemnation, but still my heart does not relent. May I not by my prayers insure that grace which shall change my disposition? If I continue to pray, will not God give me another heart? No, you have no assurance that he will. If he does, it will not be in answer to your prayers, much less can your praying insure it. Repentance is your primary and indispensable duty. This is the first step you can make towards the performance of your duty, and the enjoyment of God's favor. Until this is done nothing is done. A subject rebels against a wise and good sovereign. Pardon is proclaimed on condition that he throw down his arms and submit. Now it will little avail him, that he sends flattering messages to his sovereign, indites the most friendly addresses to the throne, or acts the most kindly part towards his fellow subjects, so long as he continues in arms and refuses to submit. If the arm of power arrest him in this condition, he will be treated, and condemned as a rebel. Having in like manner rebelled against the King of kings, who has sent you a proclamation of mercy on condition of repentance and submission, it will avail you nothing, that you offer the most importunate prayers, that you most

diligently use the means of grace, behave in the most unexceptionable manner towards your fellow men, provided you have not first repented, and submitted to God. Till you do this, every prayer you offer is mockery, every means you use is making you worse and worse. Not only does praying without repentance leave you in a state of condemnation, but impenitent prayers, however long continued, will not avail to procure repentance, either by any intrinsic efficacy of their own, or by virtue of any promise that God has given in his word. There is not one word of encouragement in the whole compass of the scriptures to any exertions of any one while he continues impenitent and unconverted. Without repentance you may pray till your last breath expires, and read the scriptures till the mist of death settles on your vision, and God not give you grace at last, and then it will be no more an imputation on the character of the Supreme, that he allowed an awakened person to die without mercy, than that he lets thousands of careless persons die without awakening. In short, I dare not, with the word of God for my guide, direct you to pray previous to repentance, and as a means of getting it—for that would be to direct you to offer an impenitent prayer, it would be to direct you to prolong rebellion, by substituting an insulting mockery for genuine submission. We must adhere to the record, and beseech you to be reconciled to God on his terms and without delay. We must urge your obligations, and call on you to cast away all your transgressions, whereby ye offend, and make you a new heart and a new spirit. To all your professions of desires after holiness, of endeavors after conversion, and persevering prayers, we must bring you back to indispensable duty, and ask, do you love God? do you repent of sin? do you believe in Christ? "No, I do not. I cannot."

What! is there nothing in the character of the infinitely glorious and blessed God that you can admire and love? No form nor comeliness in Christ why you should desire him? O what a wicked heart is that of yours, that I must stand here and plead the rights of God with you, and after all you should say that you cannot love him. The very first apprehension of his being and character should be enough to fire your hearts. You can love the world, you can love contemptible pleasures, and sinful fellow-creatures. You can love your guilty and polluted selves. You can love *sin*, the most loathsome thing in the universe, and can then plead that you cannot love God! Hear, oh heavens! and be astonished, oh earth! How can I repent? How can you help repenting? "If you loved God it would be an immediate and spontaneous emotion of your heart. You would take a sacred pleasure in indulging your grief before God. You would feel as though you should choose to go sorrowing down to the grave, and up to the world where Jesus is. How can you *help* repenting? Is it not the most rational thing in the world? Can you think of sin and its exceeding sinfulness without being filled with self-abhorrence? Can you look upon him whom your sins have pierced, without your eyes affecting your heart? "How can I believe in Christ?" How is it that you have been able to live so long without believing in him? How have you contrived to remain easy in your condemned situation, to refuse an offered and a finished salvation, to despise the bleeding love of Christ, trample under foot the blood of the covenant, reject the Saviour's kind invitations, doubt his gracious assurances, and expose yourselves to all the consequences of incurring the wrath of the Lamb? Would to God that he would arise and make you feel as though you *could* no longer disbelieve. .

FAREWELL LETTER

TO

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN SOCIETY OF MONTREAL.

My dear Brethren,

It is required by custom, that a minister, when about to retire from the pastoral care of a people who may see his face no more, should improve the solemn occasion, by taking such a view of the responsibilities of the past, as may, with the divine blessing, result favorably upon the destinies of the future. Reason and feeling alike assent to the propriety of what custom has required. If ever the monitions of a parent are likely to impress the heart of a wayward child, it is when all his sensibilities having stirred within him, he yet lingers on the threshold, ere he takes his journey to a far country. If ever the instructions of the Apostle of the Gentiles fell with the weight of eternity upon a people, among whom he had "gone preaching the kingdom of God, by the space of three years," it was, when bound in spirit, he gave them his valedictory charge, just before he went up to Jerusalem for the last time. An illness that has wasted my strength in the midst of my way, and during the last few days of my continuance among you, brought me to look over the crumbling verge of life, deprived me of the opportunity of mingling my

sympathies with yours, of uttering the parting monitions of solicitude, and giving the last expressions to affection in the ordinary way. Now that I have gained a little strength, my own inclination and your request powerfully prompt me to adopt the substitute of sending you by letter what I should have been glad to have delivered in person.

As it is of some importance that the reason of my separation from you should be distinctly understood by you all, and as my last imperfect communication, written from a sick bed, was read in the hearing of but a portion of the congregation, I choose on this occasion to repeat its contents.

When I first consented to become your pastor, it was from the conviction, that the providence of God which had brought me among you, almost in spite of my own wishes, had clearly designated the field I was to occupy. And though when mine eyes behold the King, the Lord of Hosts, I cry, "Woe is me, I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips:" though in the presence of divine equity, I feel myself at best but an unprofitable servant, still I have been more and more convinced, that the finger of God was in the arrangement. When the peculiar difficulties, and immense importance of the station, together with the youth and inexperience of him who was called to fill it, are considered, in connection with the fact of his being sustained and blessed in his work, beyond your expectations, or his own, you are forcibly reminded how much more you are indebted to the goodness of Providence than the wisdom of your choice; and he is solemnly and affectingly bound to give the glory to God, "for his mercy and truth's sake." If the enlargement and stability of your congregation, the

unembarrassed possession of a spacious and convenient place of worship, the enjoyment of what you were once stangers to—unity of heart and harmony of counsel, the shining of your light in darkness, which is beginning to comprehend it, the accession of moral strength to the visible body of Christ, and the renovation of many immortal minds, whom the Redeemer, after they have been fashioned and polished, shall set, as jewels, in his mediatorial crown; if these be just causes of thankfulness to Zion's King, we will unite in adoring him, who once made use of the *clay* in opening the eyes of the blind.

But, brethren, my work among you is done. Whether anything further remains for me to do in the world, I know not; but the Head of the Church, by the voice of Providence, now as clearly calls me away, as he once appointed my sphere of action in your part of the vineyard. The grounds on which I thus conclude, are, *my present inability to serve you, and the unlikelihood that I shall be able to do so in future*, amidst the peculiar pressure of the duties of the station, and the unfavorable severity of the climate. This I aver to be my only reason for seeking the dissolution of a connection, which has for four years so happily subsisted. I do it with the reluctance of a missionary, who, worn down in some foreign land, is driven from the strongholds he had gained, to return and breathe his native air, a useless invalid. I do it with the feelings of a soldier, whom his general commands from 'the high places of the field,' to the ignoble employment of guarding the encampment. I do it with all the laceration of affection, which takes place in being severed from a people, who have been so kind and indulgent, as I can testify you to have been. Nothwithstanding the tide of prejudice, which

in Canada sets strong and steady against a man of my country and principles; the civil disabilities under which a persecuting law lays me as a clergyman;* the separation from the sympathies of home and kindred; and the great amount of ministerial labor, unrelieved by exchanges, which my solitary position has imposed: I could feel ready to say

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* For the information of those who reside in that portion of the earth, where the word *toleration* is stricken from the political vocabulary, (a word implying that the immunities of conscience are held at the discretion of *mercy*, and not on the ground of *right*,) and yet may glance at these pages, I add a few words in explanation of a subject generally understood in Canada. By the statue of the provincial parliament, every clergyman is bound to record every baptism, marriage, and funeral, in a book of a particular description, every folio of which must be signed and *paraphe'd* by a judge of the King's Bench; and every clergyman who shall perform any of the clerical duties above mentioned, without making the record in the said book, is liable to a fine, and three months' imprisonment, for every such offence. A regulation thus salutary in determining the rights of succession, and legitimacy in families, was not complained of, until it was decided in the Superior Court of Appeals at Quebec, (his honor, the chief justice Sewall presiding, that the law, by *clergymen* and by every variety of expression, with which it designated clerical functionaries, *meant none but ministers of the Roman Catholic Church, and the two Established Churches of England and Scotland:* thus placing every pastor and congregation not connected with those bodies, under the necessity of incurring the penalties of the law, or relinquishing privileges, which both conscience and convenience made highly important. For myself, willing to show my readiness to "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," I have always declined to celebrate marriage, or responsibly to officiate at a funeral, these being no necessary parts of ministerial duty, and the civil power having a right to regulate, even though it be arbitrarily, the discharge of mere civil functions;

with the Moabitess of old, "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee." But then again, I am warned that it would not be right to cumber the ground, which demands a more efficient laborer, nor equitable to depend upon the goodness of a people, to whom in my feeble health I could render no equivalent. The highest medical authorities here interposed to say, that a continuance of my parochial duties would jeopardize my life; and the highest divine authority assured my conscience, that I had not right to throw that life away. No longer able to hesitate, as to the path of duty, I have given you

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yet, feeling myself bound to "render to God the things which are God's," in virtue of the commission, which bids us "baptize all nations," as well as "preach the Gospel to every creature," I felt conscienciously impelled to administer baptism in the face of the law and its penalty, and I must add, to the honor and liberality of the authorities of the district of Montreal, that I have never been disturbed in the discharge of this duty.

A petition for the redress of the grievance was presented to the provincial parliament in the winter of 1825, which *passed unanimously among the Roman Catholic members of the house, and was almost as unanimously opposed by the Protestant Episcopal representatives*, and needed nothing to make it a law, but the sanction of his excellency, the Earl of Dalhousie, who having reserved it for the significations of His Majesty's pleasure, nothing further has been heard of the humble petition, and religious rights of many thousands of His Majesty's most loyal subjects. May it not be hoped that this monopoly of ecclesiastical privilege, this invasion of the rights of conscience, unparalleled in British dominions, and the nineteenth century, will soon be entombed in the grave, where the spirit of English liberty has already consigned the Corporation and Test Acts, by the most august and public expression of the sense of the empire? *J. S. C.*

notice that, "if the Lord will," I shall, at the ensuing autumnal session of the first Presbytery of the city of New York, make application for the formal dissolution of the pastoral relation still subsisting between us. This is an event solemn and interesting to us both. My ministry among you, with all its eternal and unchangeable consequences, is sealed up to the judgment, when disclosures shall be made, important and tremendous to every individual who has in any way come beneath its influence; to be benefited or injured; to be enlightened or exasperated; to be awakened or stupefied in the slumbers of spiritual death. The exhibition of Christ is a test of human character, which never fails to show aman "what manner of spirit" he is of: and in proportion to the fidelity with which it is made, and the vividness with which the Holy Ghost applies that exhibition to the heart, does it concentrate the responsibility of a moral agent; aggravate the guilt of the impenitent; accelerate the process of hardening, or conversion; and converge into the compass of a small moment the scattered influences and the ordinary means of many years. That such an era, happy or unhappy, has passed with many of you, the continual and sometimes powerfully manifested presence of the Spirit of the living God among us, leaves not a shadow of doubt. In trembling hope, we must leave this subject to rest unexplored, till the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall open the seals of the book, and then "shall the thoughts of every heart be made manifest," and "the day shall declare," and the fire shall "try every man's work, of what sort it is."

Meanwhile, it is not without anxiety that I revert to your present destitute condition. Yet let those whose hearts are trembling for the ark of God, in recollecting all that is past, learn "to trust him for all that is to come." Has the Lord

brought you through the Red Sea, that he might slay you in the wilderness, you and your little ones? How often, when danger has threatened, has his overruling providence smiled, and seemed to say of the cluster which the hand of the gleaner had not conveyed to his basket, "Destroy it not: for there is a blessing in it." My prayer is, that "your eyes may soon see your teacher," that he may be a shepherd that "shall feed you with knowledge," one who shall

> "Deal sincerely with your souls
> And preach the gospel for the gospel's sake,"

that upon the foundation already laid he may build with gold, silver and precious stones, and that he may see the temple of the Lord, in silent majesty arise until the top-stone be laid, with the shoutings of "grace, grace unto it!"

Immense responsibility is devolved upon you, as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though planted near the very frontier of Christendom, you are situated in the New-York of the North, already the centre of knowledge and commerce, and soon to be the centre of political influence to the Canadas. Your lot is cast in a land, *here* presenting the interesting spectacle of the old feudal forms of society, moved by the impulse of mind beneath, just beginning to break up, from the long congealment of the wintry ages gone by; and *there*, of another portion of the community, warm with all the fermenting elements of modern activity, about to receive the impression, which the present day shall instamp on the present and future generations. Was there ever an age, not excepting the first, or the sixteenth centuries, presenting such a field for moral influence, or richer in the budding prospects of millenial maturity? My dear brethern, I am,

above all things, anxious that you should feel the spirit of the times, that made acquainted with the hour of the day, you should no longer sleep as do others, but awake to put on the whole armor of God. To "seek the things which are Jesus Christ's," cordially to fall in with, and urge forward the great plans of his benevolence, is a higher and a more important object, than even to seek your own salvation. The conquests of the Church have, in other ages, been made at the expense of *blood;* her peaceful triumphs must now be sustained by the *tribute-money* of her children. The cause of Christ has needed the argument of patient suffering; it will now best be benefited by the efforts of self-denying activity. And if those, who now enrol themselves among the soldiers of the cross, have so little love for the kingdom of Christ, that with great reluctance they spare a pittance of the property entrusted to their stewardship, for the Gospel's sake, and the sake of all its blessed successes; with what cowardice would they have shrunk from the honorable dangers of those ranks, which, in other ages, were daily filling up for martyrdom? This is a view of the conditions of discipleship, which should induce "great searchings of heart" in the camp of Israel. If a man will "serve the Lord Christ," he must lay himself out for sacrifices, and "prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy." And doing so, he will not be long, in this world of misery and pollution, without finding some object upon which he may expend the labor of love. If he cannot give property, he may give personal exertion, and if disabled from this, he may, in the act of intercession, lay hold on the arm of omnipotence, and bring down blessings which no gold can purchase, which no human agency can supersede. If you esteem yourself but a drop in the ocean of needed

benevolence, "*be a drop.*" And if through your whole little orb, you lie open to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the highest angel in heaven could ask no more.

Let me then charge you, with an earnestness commensurate with the importance of the duty, to give the whole weight of your influence, the full measure of your co-operation, and the liberal contributions of your means, to the various benevolent institutions which have been, within a few years, organized, and are now benignly operating in your city, and the province at large. It is not needful for me to enforce the various claims of the Bible Society, of the Tract Society, the Sabbath School cause, or the Education and Home Missionary Society. May they each be like "a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf shall not wither, and which bringeth forth its fruit in its season." May they obtain favor of the Lord, by finding more grace in the eyes of the people; and scatter increasing light through all the dark places of a neglected land, which may well be styled, "This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." There is yet another society, which, when I left you, was in its infant helplessness, in whose continued existence and increasing efficiency I feel a lively interest; I mean "*the Society for the promotion of Temperance.*" The evils which it aims to remove, and which, were the temperate united in its principles, it would be successful in removing, are of giant magnitude, and no less afflictive to the Christian than painful to the philanthropist. With a little activity among the officers of that society, I would not despair of seeing all Canada ameliorated by its influence, in half a score of years. The progress of public sentiment on that subject, has been in these United States unparalleled, in the history of prin-

ciple triumphing over custom and crime. I have witnessed in a large parish, where two years since strong drink was an almost universal favorite, and seemed essential to all the movements of pleasure or business, such a reformation of sentiment, that the offer of liquor would now be considered an insult, and the use of it a disgrace—a town in whose whole limits, ardent spirits can be purchased at but one single shop, the *dernier resort*, the last unconquered position of the shameless and incorrigible lovers of rum. And what has taken place in that town, is what has taken place, to a greater or less degree, in hundreds of towns—an effect, which has outstripped the most sanguine anticipations of the friends of temperance, and promises in reasonable time to extirpate the deceitful gangrene that was rapidly eating its way to the very heart of society. The case is so clear, the facts so strong, and the ground now taken of total abstinence, so easy and effectual, that human minds needed only to be enlightened on the subject, and human hearts would and did feel. I need not tell you that similar consequences will everywhere follow similar antecedents. The case is so clear, the facts so strong, and the ground now taken so easy and effectual, that an adoption of the principles of the society seems to me to be no longer a matter of choice, but of conscientious necessity. If a man would not violate "the royal law" of love to his neighbor; if he would not risk his own virtue in the vortex of temptation; if he would not be necessary to the temporal and spiritual perdition of his fellow-men; if he would not continue in league with the direst enemy of the interests of righteousness and peace, in our guilty world: then must he enlist under the standard of total abstinence. To adopt these principles is not enough. They must be *professed*. Your

light burns well, but it is under a bushel. You owe it to God and the community, to declare your practice, by a connection with the Temperance Society, which derives strength from the union, and success from the decided combination of numbers. I now proceed one step further than the societies for the promotion of temperance have gone, and as a minister of Christ, addressing his people for the last time, declare my decided conviction, *that all manufacture and traffic in ardent spirits, except so far as the apothecary may need them, is criminal.* If intemperance would be criminal in yourself, then is it wrong to supply the means of inebriation to another. If a third person reap the profit of your conscientiousness by vending the article, which you refused to sell, your obligation is not at all diminished by his want of principle. If it be criminal to add in any way to the amount of human misery, then, he who multiplies the facilities of drinking, is criminal. If it be criminal to increase the difficulty of virtue, and spread the snare of tempting indulgence before the eye of burning appetite; then he who, for lucre's sake, fills up the cup for his brother man, is criminal. If it be criminal to increase the sum of human crime; then he who, by his very business administers an article, which adds fire to passion, and energy to depravity, is most deeply criminal. Good men have, doubtless, unthinkingly been engaged in this traffic, but with the light now pouring on the moral sense of the community, good men cannot much longer deal in the accursed thing. Good men have even commanded slave-ships, but he who should now barter in the persons and liberties of his fellow man, would be branded with an infamy—indelible as that of Cain. Yet intemperance has seized on more victims, inflicted more suffering, instigated to more crime,

occasioned a greater waste of life, and entailed a more deplorable bondage, than the slave trade, with all the horrors of its burning villages, its heart-rending separations —its middle passage, its irons, and its bloody scourge—the barbarism of its shambles, and the hopelessness of its servitude. I trust in God the time is not far distant, when public sentiment, redeemed from the infatuation of custom, and purified from the degrading influence of cupidity, shall deem it no less an outrage on humanity to land upon our shore a cargo of brandy, than to disgorge upon it a shipload of famished and manacled Africans.

While thus, my brethren, by a patient continuance in prosecuting the leading aims of benevolence, you are securing your own perseverance, and enhancing the glory of your final reward, what shall hinder a triumph over the gates of hell, in the experience of your particular church, any more than in the case of the individual believers, which compose it, or of the church universal, of which it forms a part? What shall hinder that it may not be perpetuated through future time, a rallying point of evangelism, a radiating centre of healing influence, and a nursery for the ministry? What *shall* hinder, but your own neglect of those measures, which may perpetuate your purity? what, but your own guilt, which may provoke a holy God to command the clouds, that they rain not upon you, till you become like a barren heath in the wilderness? Next to those securities which shall prevent the goodly fabric in which you worship "Christ within us the hope of glory" from being prostituted as the seat of formalism, the mere lecture room of morality, or the judgment hall, where rude profaneness shall put the crown of thorns on the Redeemer's head afresh; next to the assurance of an evangelical and

orthodox succession in the ministry, I deem important a wise precaution in the admission of candidates to the church, and a sedulous guardianship of those lines of separation and defence, which like a "wall of fire around about," shall inclose "the glory in the midst."

It needs but little observation to discover, that the current of public opinion, evinced by a manifest aversion to creeds and confessions, is sapping the ancient bulwarks of the faith once delivered to the saints. The love of novelty, the pride of originality, a contempt for the wisdom of our fathers, a well-meaning zeal for the undiminished authority of the Bible, and an ignorant opinion that creeds are made to supersede the infallible word, may have each actuated the minds of some, while others, it is to be feared, are provoked in their hostility to symbols of belief, by the consciousness that these stern guardians of orthodoxy rebuke their impatience of control, and contravene their secret attachment to heretical sentiments. It is to no purpose to say that churches have no right to require terms of admission, which are not required in the New Testament. It is granted; but they are bound to require in candidates for membership credible evidence that they are already savingly united to the Lord Jesus Christ, and no small part of this evidence is a *belief of the truth*. I have never known a church, however latitudinarian its terms of communion; I have never met with an enemy of creeds, however violent his outcry against the standards of the church, that would admit to the privileges of Christian fellowship, without any regard to the principles of the applicant. Be the limits of charity wide or narrow, still every church has its limits. No orthodox church, for instance, would admit a unitarian or universalist. No unitarian or universalist church will admit

a Mohammedan or Buddhist. All men and all churches, then, have their creeds, which must be believed, and their rules of distinction, which must be applied. The controversy now resolves itself into this simple question: Shall a church, in order to satisfy itself that a candidate believes the truth, ask such questions on the leading points of doctrine as may extemporaneously occur to the mind of its interrogating organ; or shall it commit to writing such a syllabus of Christian doctrine as the candidate may previously examine, and having approved, assent to, with intelligence and deliberation? and which method will ensure the greatest precision, that which leaves a confession of faith, in all its indefiniteness, floating on the mind; or that which reduces it to the certainty and explicitness of a digested and written epitome? Or does the crime of confessions consist in committing to paper that which before was existing in the mind, and bringing into systematic arrangement that which was previously disordered and confused? Since creeds, operating as a test of the religious principles of candidates, must exist, either oral or written; and as no man could well object to that which is oral being transferred to a regular and written form, the only remaining objection does not exist against having *creeds* and *written* creeds, but against the *form* and *contents* of creeds. If the objector denies some of the fundamental truths of our religion, and is therefore hostile to a form of sound words, we perceive at once the utility of the creed, which has already separated the chaff from the wheat. If he be a good man, and embraces the evangelical system, and yet maintains that such a confession as was made by the Ethiopian nobleman, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," is as much as we may demand, let him be instructed, that *that* confession in the apostolic

age carried more meaning and formed more decisive evidence of having cordially embraced Christianity than can at the present day be expected from the most extensive declaration of faith. If he still prefer that no question be put, but the single one, "Do you receive the scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" let him for a moment reflect that every heresiarch would promptly respond in the affirmative, and the church speedily, resembling the ark of the world's second progenitor, become the receptable of every species of creature, clean and unclean. If he next prefer that the test should be, "Do you believe the doctrines taught in the scriptures?" the question is a good one; but he must immediately perceive a necessity, in order to a mutual understanding, that the person give, in his own uninspired and unequivocal words, an outline of what he considers the doctrines taught in the scriptures to be; in other words, the man must give a confession of his faith. Where then, is the difference between this, and your putting into his hands a confession already prepared, for his examination and assent, but the single circumstance, that the latter method is by far the most convenient, especially in its operation on the more illiterate, who would find no little difficulty in throwing their views into a correct and intelligible form. Let the churches, however, remember, when they propose the terms of faith on which they will, and without which they will not receive into their fellowship, that they are answerable to the Great Head of the Church, that they be none other than the doctrines of the New Testament; that their confession be not so general as to be indefinite, nor so particular as to embrace points not essential, and which the young believer, whose eye yet

resting on the central glories of the great redemption, cannot reasonably be supposed to have surveyed with discriminating attention. While therefore the confession made by candidates for the Christian communion should cover the whole ground of fundamental truth and no more, it may be expected that the tests proposed at the ordination of deacons and ministers, whose larger opportunities and maturer experience have enabled them to examine the connection and importance of every part of revealed truth, be more minute and extensive. That the church of Christ may have erred in determining the dubious line between the *essential* and the *important* in the one case, and the *important* and *unimportant* in the other, we may reasonably conclude. That the natural indolence of the human mind may have led thousands to adopt a human creed as the infallible standard of truth instead of using it as a convenient expression of what they believed the infallible word of God to contain, may be concluded with equal safety. And yet neither conclusion will warrant us in the position that creeds may be dispensed with. Without them, the finger of discipline could point the heretic to no violated stipulation. Without them, the church would present to the world no exhibition of the system of truth which she prized and guarded; and when the mind of the enquirer was drifting at random in the open sea of speculation, or driving by night upon the hidden rocks of error, no flaming beacon would cast its friendly ray athwart the darkness. Without them, there would be no way of learning the sentiments of associated bodies of professing Christians, in order to ascertain whether an unity of faith formed any common ground of fellowship and co-operation. Till I know that a minister preaches Jesus and his

gospel, I cannot place myself beneath his ministrations. Till I know that a church believes in that Jesus, and embraces his gospel, I cannot place myself at the table of its communion; and till two *churches* be satisfied that each other hold the common salvation, they can never unite in any common plan for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. Though some misguided men of worth join with others of doubtful integrity, and raise the outcry against every form of sound words to the loudest note of violence, let us not, brethren, relinquish a means of purity which the church of Christ has in every age found of such essential importance; and because our confession of faith may not be perfect, abandon it altogether, and prostrate every barrier that separates the garden of Christ from the wide wilderness of the world. While we encourage that activity of mind which "proves all things," let us retain the firmness of purpose which "holds fast that which is good." And if from the strong hold of a scriptural creed, from whence the invader has never been able to dislodge the truth, we can look with composure upon his feeble efforts to lay waste the heart of our territory, why should we for the miserable compensation of an enemy's praise of our liberality, throw open our gates to the march of the destroyer? While therefore you would retain the spouse of the Redeemer in the unviolated sanctity of a "garden inclosed," "a spring shut up," "a fountain sealed," "go thy way forth by the *footsteps of the flock.*" "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the *old paths*, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

It is only so long as the church is in the purity of her doctrine "fair as the moon, in e diffusiveness of her

benevolence "clear as the sun," that she appears to the eye of the beholder "beautiful as Tirzah," and to the apprehension of her enemies "terrible as an army with banners." It is only so long as you continue the depository and guardian of the truth that your influence will be salutary and hallowed. And it is only so long as it is such that you may expect the care of Israel's unslumbering Watchman, and the safety of dwelling beneath the shadow of the Almighty. Therefore is it that I am so strenuous to confirm your love of the truth, and to deepen your abhorrence of error. While it is delightful to think that the various denominations into which professing christendom is divided are working a far larger amount of good than a less spirited unanimity would have secured, while it is charitable to believe that these various sections of Israel's camp are, in their respective allotments, marching under the guidance of the same cloudy pillar, it is still Christian to maintain that there are errors fundamental and heresies damnable. My brethren, you must expect to meet with those who, clamorous for peace and fierce for toleration, will stigmatize with puritanical perverseness the Christian fidelity which will not assign to *sincerity in error* the place of *obedience to truth*; which will not esteem it indifferent whether we be the subjects of a radical moral change, or die with all the elements of hell in our bosom; whether the Saviour on whom we are to lean when our heart-strings are breaking in death, be an arm of flesh, or the eternal God, the Father of our spirits, and the Lord of that world on which we enter. No! you cannot, as many of you as have been "taught of God;" you cannot, as many of you as are illumined by reason—God's responsible gift—for a moment hesitate, whether the difference between the two systems be not

great, radical, and of hopeless breadth; a breach, wide and deep as the sea, which no labor of charity can ever close, no line of liberality ever span. And if the difference be thus irreconcileable, I beseech you, by all that is important in truth, by all that is transforming and transcendant in the light of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, never to think for one moment of coming down from your high ground of inflexible principle, to treat with the smooth-tongued disciples of error, the religious votaries of the world, whether they be clothed in the more respectable garb of the unitarian, or in the coarser habiliment of an universalist. Be they irreproachable in civil life, respectable for their wealth, or desirable for their numbers, still covet not their alliance. Their influence will secularize, their wealth will corrupt, their numbers overpower in all leading questions, which involve the purity, and of course the real prosperity of your Zion. But I need not enlarge, for as on this point you are particularly exposed, so here too I believe you are especially guarded. Of this I am the more confident, as already in my absence, when one came unto you and brought not the doctrine of Christ, you received him not into your house of worship, neither bade him "God speed." (See 2 John ix. 10.) It was a good precedent, and shows with what solemnity you have pondered the question, "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?"

There is yet another topic, on which I wish to communicate a few thoughts, and that is the subject of religious revivals. The progress of these extraordinary manifestations of divine power has in this country, been long identified with the progress of vital piety; and the man who, acquainted with their nature, does not hail their extension,

is justly suspected of being offended with the purest specimens of the power of godliness on earth. By these effusions of the Spirit, the most high God has in latter times distinguished this land above all others, and almost designated the inheritance of our pilgrim fathers, as "the land of promise." And I look upon it as a most auspicious token for Canada, that it has been already visited with that most glorious form of the dispensation of the Spirit. It was like offering before the altar of the Lord, the wave-sheaf of the first fruits, by which the whole harvest becomes consecrated to God, and a pledge is given that the entire productions of the year shall yet be joyously gathered in. It was like marking and sealing your province with the earnest of redemption, and designating its populous extent as the seat of revivals, when along the peaceful shores of its majestic river, and through the neat and smiling villages of its fertile plains, salvation shall roll its gladdening streams, and "the light of life" throw a brighter tinge over all the associations of its landscapes. Oh! my brethren, let not the coal kindled from heaven upon your altar be extinguished, till the sacred fire be conveyed in many a direction, and lighted in many a place around you.

But you know well, that the subject is not thus favorably regarded by the great body of protestants in the province. Ministers and people, and even those in whom there appears "something good towards the Lord God of Israel," have viewed the revival, with which we are blessed, with scorn, suspicion or indifference, according as the state of their moral feelings, and the point of their observation modified their impression. While one worthy clerical brother, who turned aside to examine the character of this religious phenomenon, new to him, exclaimed, that the

finger of God was in it of a truth, and has since rejoiced in the fruits of such a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, among his own people, another clergyman of my acquaintance, has told me, that I should regret ever having had a part in such a scene of fanaticism and delusion. You know how often it has been repeated in the outskirts of our camp, and how chill an intimidation it has thrown into the hearts of less informed and courageous brethren, that, "there were no revivals in Great Britain;" at the same time insinuating, that as they were a peculiarity of the western world, they could be no desirable or genuine form of Christianity; nay, that they were a monstrous excrescence of feeling, from which the piety of Europe was happily free. But is it true, let me ask, that there have been no revivals in that land of noble deeds, and hallowed associations? Not to revert to the scenes of the Reformation, when rapid and simultaneous conversions were everywhere occurring, what is the testimony of Gillies' Historical Collections, of Fleming's Scripture Fulfilled, the narrative of the Cambuslang Revival, and the lives of such men as Baxter, Wesley, Whitefield, Grimshaw, Berridge, and a host of others? It is true, their mantles have not fallen upon men of like spirit and power. No Boanerges of the British pulpit at the present day, carries that demonstration of the Spirit into the darkness of the heart; or, moving with their moral power, throws such extensive consternation and defeat into the ranks of sin. There are many there who adorn the ministry with the rich treasures of learning, sacred and profane. Many there are who bring the splendor of genius, the ardor of piety, and the eloquence of feeling under the tribute of Immanuel's service. An increasing number labor within the two Establishments

and without, with the tokens of God's blessing on their ministrations, manifested in the increasing spirituality of Christians, and constant, and sometimes unusual accessions to the number of the professing brethren. But still, what may be termed *revivals*, in the extent, rapidity, frequency, and Pentacostal power of those which characterize the United States, are there unknown. If the fact were doubted, it could be easily confirmed by the statements of their own writers, and religious journalists. How shall we answer the question then, that revivals do not occur in the pure churches, and beneath the pious ministrations of Britain? We dare not say that the Spirit, in his more extraordinary operations, is restricted to this side of the ocean. Nor may we resolve it into a matter of unsearchable sovereignty. The constituted connection between human exertion and the divine blessing, authorizes us in the conclusion, that there must be an adequate moral cause in the transatlantic churches, to account for their destitution of the richer blessings conferred on the Zion of the new world. May it not resolve the difficulty to ascertain, whether the churches of Britain, after all the promises of faith's omnipotence in prayer, ever supplicate, or having supplicated, ever expect such manifestations of the Redeemer's power over the hearts of men? A few individuals, animated by the accounts they have received of American revivals, have begun to associate and plead, if peradventure the Lord would in like manner open the windows of heaven upon them; but the smallness of their numbers is conclusive, that *the churches in a body, have not put themselves in the attitude of agonizing, and prevailing intercession* with that God, who "will be inquired of by the house of Israel for these things." The enquiry may again

be pertinently made, whether our British brethren in the ministry, notwithstanding all that is respectable in their acquirements, and lovely in their piety, and attractive in their ministrations, do ever distinctly *aim* as the result of their labors at such apostolical displays of all-conquering grace, do ever secure the co-operation of their church members to obtain a grand concentration of human means, and divine energy to bear upon the unconverted portion of their charge? It may be asked, whether with an impressive sense of their own utter helplessness, yet laying hold on the strength of the Most Mighty, and keeping their heart, and their eye steadily fixed on the great object to be secured, they follow up the impression made by one portion of pungent truth, with the exhibition of another of still more convincing power; and not content, while one method of awakening remains untried, carry the awful claims of religious obligation to the private abode of every slumbering sinner? If a conclusion may be drawn from all the data respecting the state of the pastoral function, which can be collected by one who has never been actually on the spot, *these things are never done with that emphasis of feeling and action*, which is frequently exemplified in this country of revivals. If then we are not mistaken in our estimate of the state of feeling with regard to revivals in the churches of our transatlantic brethren, and of the state of that ministerial exertion usually necessary for their production; we are furnished with a sufficient answer to the objection we have heard so often repeated in Canada, by those who would call into question those glorious things which God had done for us, and whereof we were glad. May we not also hope, that the attention which this subject is beginning to awaken in the English community, will

conduct their discrimination and their candour to the true cause of their destitution of these more remarkable triumphs of Zion's King, and that ere long there will arrive on the wings of every eastern wind, the glad report, that the Redeemer has girded his sword upon his thigh, and in his majesty, is riding prosperously, because of meekness, and truth, and righteousness. I would that those who object to the work of grace in a revival because it is so rapid and extensive, would consider a moment that the prayer, which perhaps they daily present for the salvation of *all* men, if answered, would be followed by a revival, which in order to snatch men from the bondage of sin, before they are consigned to the unalterable condition of the dead, must from henceforth be co-extensive with the inhabited earth! Benevolence surely would not object to a state of things essential to the salvation of mankind, and yet if conversions occurred no more frequently than deaths, the whole face of the world would present the aspect of one vast revival. Never then let one feeling of chilling doubt, or timid shame, cross your mind, with regard to those events in which the church has rejoiced, and angels been glad; events in which candor may perceive the repetition of New Testament scenes, faith recognize the fulfilment of the divine promises, and benevolence hail, as the only way in which an apostate world may speedily return to God. Be especially guarded against that spirit of supineness, which having enjoyed a portion of reviving influence, is averse to the exertion essential to the reception of more; and watch against that tincture of fatalism, with which good men are prone to lull themselves, and one another, when sleeping at the post of duty, by saying, "The time to build the temple of the Lord has not yet come; when the *set time* to favor Zion

has arrived, we shall enjoy those blessings, which come not according to the will of man, but when inscrutable sovereignty shall appoint." In this, the language of our indolent hearts, there is a deceitful blending of truth with error, and a wicked evasion of present obligation. For is not a revival, in its two leading features of elevated piety in the church and frequent conversions in the congregation, in the first place, precisely what Christians ought, and may always feel; and in the second, what, in answer to prayer, they might always expect and enjoy? Is it not *always* the time to build the temple of the Lord, so long as it lies dilapidated with the wastes of many generations? and is not the time, yea, the set time, for God to arise and have mercy on Zion, that *very time*, when his "servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof?" And shall we with promises so large, and precepts so explicit, disbelieve the one, and disobey the other, and then take refuge under the secret will and sovereign purposes of God, which were never intended as *our* rule of action? "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast and unmovable, *always* abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

During four years past, I have testified to you the Gospel of the grace of God. I have sedulously avoided all curious questions, doubtful disputations, and every subject whose radiations do not branch into the very heart of Christianity. The Heart-searcher is witness that I have been anxious to engrave such truths upon your minds, as it were worthy an immortal spirit to bear recorded on the tablets of the heart, and such as I knew must one day be exhibited as evidence of what was written on my own. In unfolding the message

which I have been charged to deliver and enforce, you cannot have forgotten, that the fact of your alienation from God lay at the very base of all:—a depravity commencing with the first actual exercise of every human moral agent; —a depravity not seated in some physical defect anterior to actual sin, beyond the control of the will, and of course without the limits of moral government;—a depravity which no array of motives, no apparatus of means ever has, or ever will be able to subdue; a depravity of so deadly a virus, that notwithstanding all the fair morality, the sentimental admiration, or the fond love of reflected selfishness which unrenewed humanity daily exhibits, is still rank and bitter enmity against the character and government of Jehovah the Supreme. You remember too, how, notwithstanding this desperate wickedness of the heart, the claims of the law in all the perfection of its obedience, and a compliance with the Gospel in all the spirituality of its meaning, have been urged upon you, and urged with a fearless conviction, that depravity constituted no good reason for the non-performance of duty. In connection with the fact that you *can*, but of your own accord *never will* change your hearts, you have been taught, that if ever it takes place, it will be by a divine influence, and that this divine influence may, or may not be communicated to you, by a sovereign God whose law you have broken, and whose grace you resist in those very prayers which anxious unregeneracy will offer, and awakened impenitence pour forth. Still the duty of prayer, holy and genuine prayer, has been urged upon all without exception. Such repentance as ensures the forsaking of sin, and such faith in the atoning merits of Jesus, as includes a renunciation of every false ground of pardon, and a cordial acceptation of grace abounding

through righteousness, have been proclaimed as the terms of the Gospel reconciliation. You have been instructed too, that the faith which accompanies pardon is accompanied by love;—that holy, disinterested, supreme, and fervent approbation of God and his ways;—that impartial benevolence to men as creatures;—and that complacency in the saints as holy creatures, which fulfils the law as far as it exists, by leading to the exercise of every Christian grace, and every moral virtue. The perfection, spirituality, and sanctions of the law have been in a measure developed, and most distinctly has it been announced, that human character undergoes no essential moral change after the article of death, which "fixes him that is holy" in a state where he shall "be holy still," and "him that is filthy" in that world where, in the absence of all restraining and all sanctifying influences, he shall be forever and forever "filthy still."

These truths, in the effectual belief of which consists the world's salvation, have been exhibited to you according to the feeble measure of my ability in every impressive manner I could invent, repeated in the form of didactic discussion and earnest exhortation, in the shape of petition to God, and entreaty to man, of public preaching, and private instruction, in the sanctuary, and from house to house. In the tremendous progress of such a moral process, "many have been purified and made white and tried," but many of "the wicked still do wickedly." Some have been exasperated, and walked no more with us. Some, to escape the obligation which the truth involves, have courted errors and become the dupes of lies. Some, after pungent awakening, have reverted to a state which makes it the less likely that the evil spirits of indifference and stupidity will ever be driven from their "swept and garnished" residence. Some

who worshipped with us, have gone to that world where the strong conviction of these eternal realities has burst upon their unsealed vision, and have been there convinced of those doctrines, which charity can gather no reason to believe were ever cordially embraced in this world of mercy's reign. · How solemn the reflection to you and to me, that many have already passed to their unchangeable destinies, with a moral character which received its last moulding impression from my ministry! And if that be a solemn consideration, is it not a distressing one, that there are some who are now less hopeful candidates for holiness and heaven, than they were before my connection with you; some who, having neglected the day of their merciful visitation, have "the things which belong to their peace forever hid from their eyes;" some who, "now joined to their idols," God and his Providence, and ministers, and Spirit will henceforth let alone? When I think that perhaps a little more pains-taking on my part, a little more travail of the heart in prayer, a little more labor of the intellect in the presentation of motives, a little more toil of the body in following you with the entreaties of solicitude to your dwellings, might possibly have saved some one, I feel that there may be a propriety in adopting the Psalmist's petition, "*Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.*" If there be those, with respect to whom fidelity demanded more exertion, or those upon whom fidelity was exerted in vain, let me, dying men, this once renew my expostulation; and, as a friend embarked from the shore, waves his hand when his voice can no longer be heard, let me make this last appeal to your consciences, in the only mode that is now left me: "I am pained at my very heart, I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast

heard, O, my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Would to God, that with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, I could write upon the mind of every unregenerate man whom I address, the awful conviction, that his heart is to its very core inimical to infinite loveliness, and that with a mind running counter to the mind of God, he must feel dissatisfied and miserable in any part of Jehovah's dominions, where his character is exhibited and his government maintained! Need he any longer marvel that the lips of unchangeable truth, in conformity to the everlasting principles of the divine administration, have assured him that he "must be born again?" Would that he realized, that having by the very bent of his heart, as well as the whole direction of his life, already sinned, he is already condemned by a holy law, incapable of satisfying its demands, or restoring its honor by any equivalent of obedience, or suffering, and that the eternal Son of God, by the most wonderful movement yet recorded in the chronicles of eternity, has done every thing that justice and the interests of empire made necessary for the pardon of every human being, but secure their respective and cordial acceptance of the great salvation. And will you not respectively and cordially accept? Will you not love the Lord God? and loving Him, can you fail to repent of your aggravated offences against him, and feeling the insufficiency of repentance, will you not lay your hand on the head of the atoning Lamb, and so lay hold on eternal life? Or will you persist in sin and die?—Then I call heaven and earth to witness that I am pure from your blood. Oh! when we shall meet at the judgment bar of Christ, you shall not accuse me, that I have cried "peace, peace, when there was no peace,"

"healed the hurt of the daughter of Zion slightly," and prophesied the deceits of my own heart. "For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God," and would humbly trust with all faithful ministers of the reconciliation, that "we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that perish," as well as "in them that are saved." And shall any of my dear people finally and forever perish? Though I know not who they be, or how many, yet I cannot doubt the fact without the reversion of every moral probability. Oh! then, let me weep over you now—for at the judgment seat, awed into perfect acquiescence with the lucid developments of "the righteous judgment of God," I shall not (if not myself a castaway) be permitted to weep over those from whom the boundless mercy of God is clean gone forever. To have seen you in those minor distresses of life, when your heart has looked for those consolations which a pastor's sympathy might impart, to have watched your bodily anguish, or have grieved over your moral unfitness, when about to pass the tremendous limit of probation, were enough for human endurance; but what, lost soul! is this to the second death—to the sensations which will harrow your heart at our next meeting, when there shall come crowding on your mind all the recollections of sabbaths which came and went without improvement; of exhortations which were heard and forgotten without amendment; of ministers who spent their strength and wore out their frame without blessing you; of the Holy Spirit whose strivings were resisted till he left you without conversion; of the great salvation brought within your very grasp but not embraced; and a Saviour, whose blood was shed that you might count it an unclean thing! Oh how will you feel, when you shall look upon him whom you have pierc-

ed, and see the incensed Judge upon the great white throne to be the Jesus whom I have preached and you rejected! "Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

I turn from these saddening reflections to drop a few lines to my professing brethren. We have seen the little band, who, united by the tie of covenant and the badge of profession, formed the nucleus of our infant church, at every commemoration of the death of their risen Saviour, enlarged by encouraging accessions. But it is safe to rejoice with trembling, and reasonable to expect, that "all are not Israel who are of Israel." It will be so as long as those who hold the key of admission are fallible men; as long as there are candidates who deceive themselves or may deceive others. It is not necessary to tell you, that to be enrolled in the register of the church is no evidence that your name is recorded among "the living in Jerusalem." But it is highly important that you should be aware of the danger of being unconsciously a dead branch on the living vine, and cherishing "a hope which shall perish with the giving up of the ghost." It is enough to make the blood of any one, who has not attained the full assurance of his Christian integrity, freeze in his veins, when he considers the causes which may operate in the production and continuance of fatal delusion. Consider a moment the possibility, that those religious exercises from which you date the commencement of your Christian existence, may have been the counterfeit operations of selfishness, excited by the mere love of happiness and attachment to any thing which relieves its fears or favors its views. How easily may anxiety for one's state be mistaken for conviction of his

guilt; the pleasure arising from the belief of dangers past, for joy in the Holy Ghost and peace in believing; and a fond attachment to God arising from the mere apprehension that he has become the sinner's particular and unchangeable friend, be substituted for that genuine love of God which is founded on a sense of his own intrinsic loveliness, and which will continue to exist whether he is viewed as reconciled or not. How likely is it that a hope thus insufficiently embraced will be sedulously cultivated, from the pride of consistency, the strength of self-complacency, and the love of ease; that formality may be mistaken for devotion, and after so much having been done for the attainment of salvation, the mind be slow to entertain the conviction that it has all been done in vain. Consider, that professors by the very ground they have taken, have placed themselves where they are above the range of those arrows of truth which are directed against the impenitent, and by their very familiarity with the topics of religion, and the customary frequency with which they appear in that presence where Gabriel bows; if their hearts be not touched by a sanctifying influence, must necessarily lose their sense of the awfulness of sacred things, and with it, their susceptibility of religious impression, and every ordinary probability of genuine conversion. Consider that Satan and your own heart are leagued to perpetuate the mistake by every expedient of self-flattery, till death shall strip the bandage off, and the light of eternity shall pour on the mind the overwhelming conviction of suicidal, of remediless ruin! If any other consideration were wanting to make one afraid lest he should prove at last to have been a "sinner in Zion," and share in the fearfulness that shall "surprise the hypocrites," it is the

fact that so few professors of religion ever experience a moral renovation after they have once classed themselves with the followers of the Lord Christ; a fact which a righteous judgment compels us to explain, not by the purity of the churches, but by the hopelessness of self-deception. But, brethren, I would "hope better things of you, even things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak."

I have been honored to be the instrument of the spiritual renovation of most of you:—to most of you, I hope, too, a helper of your faith, and a promoter of your joy. This was to me a delight, which He who "holds the seven stars in his right hand," disposing of them as he will, no longer allows. Still, however, my interest in your welfare shall not cease. My prayer shall still be in your affliction, my thanksgiving in your prosperity. With solicitude I look forward to your various and weary progress heavenward. Trials, temporal and spiritual, lie before every one of you that are the children of God. If you would take the experience of one who has made larger trial of the divine goodness since he last addressed you than ever, "Trust in the Lord. O, Israel, trust thou in the Lord; he is their help and their shield." "It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." With Christ in the vessel, fear not but you shall outride the storm; and though he may seem to sleep, "his heart waketh," and when best, he will show his command over the elements of nature, as well as the dominions of mind. If he think it best to conduct you through affliction, he can make your trials like the darkness of night, which, while it hides this world from our vision, discovers to our view others, till then

unseen. Above all things, strive for greater attainments in piety. God will be your very present help, if you stedfastly aim at the perfection of your sanctification, and the enjoyment of those unclaimed rights which lie sealed with the Redeemer's blood. The object is practicable. A higher standard is attainable; "for it is *God* that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Shall sloth prevent? "What, can ye not watch one hour," for the attainment of that for which your Saviour agonized? Your very *temporal* happiness is involved in the decision of this question. The men of this world may have a portion here, but the sons of God, the heirs of heaven, will not be allowed the same satisfaction in the pleasures of sin. If they will not walk in the light of God's countenance, this earth shall be to them shrouded with desolation. Why should you shrink from a "closer walk with God?" What iniquity have you found in Him? Has He been "a wilderness unto Israel—a land of darkness?" Or have you not uniformly found your diligence abundantly repaid, by the composure of your mind, by the pleasantness of his service, by the indulgence of your hopes, the enlargement of your experience, and the success of your endeavors to serve Him? Is it nothing to you that you will honor God by eminent piety; and that you are placed in those circumstances, where true religion so peculiarly needs the silent and convincing illustration of holy lives? Brethren, you do not, you cannot appreciate how much your every day conduct is determining the weight of your own eternal glory, how much it is moulding the character and destiny of immortal minds, on which you are hourly leaving permanent impressions, which are not one of them indifferent, but all salutary or mischievous. Lay aside, then, every

weight that would retard; abandon every company that would pollute; relinquish every habit that would obstruct the growth or the comfort of religion in your hearts. "Let thine eye be single, and thy whole body shall be full of light." Let your spirit be right, and your worldly business shall be no obstruction, but the very commonest employments of life shall be occasions of serving the King of heaven, and the most familiar objects of nature and events of providence, be so many ministers of instruction and means of grace. Thus may you find a living well in "passing the valley of Baca," and go from strength to strength, till each "in Zion shall appear before God." "Soon our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." There is but a step between us and death. "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." How rapidly have I seen it changing within the little circle of our congregation, within the revolutions of four years! Through what varieties of sickness, through what fluctuations of property, through what diversities of condition, have I seen some of you pass! How many who went to the house of God in company with us, are scattered in their various dispersions; some to the boundless contiguity of the wilderness,

"Where no shepherd's tents appear,"

and others to more favored localities of the Redeemer's presence and institutions. These losses have been supplied

by more, who, turning to us, as the people of the living God, have said,

> "Brethren, where your altar burns,
> Oh, receive us into rest."

Already we have seen several of our brethren and sisters falling asleep in Jesus, and have followed them with hoping sorrow to the grave, over which the sward even now waves green. "The fashion of this world passeth away." No more as your pastor shall I go in and out before you;—no more our supplications be mingled for Zion's good;—or our thanksgivings be united for supplications heard. I know that a part, perhaps the whole of you, shall never see my face again. But the Gospel which you have not been ashamed to embrace as men, which I have not been ashamed to preach as a minister, and which none of us ought to be ashamed to die for as martyrs, stamping such value on the immortal soul, discloses the blessedness of "the dead who die in the Lord." What if the world, like the shadow of a dial has passed, even while looked on, the Sun of Righteousness has risen on the great cycle of eternity, never to set! What if "one church above," beneath we are parted by the swellings of Jordan, we shall meet when safe arrived on the other side. Is it not natural to believe and pleasant to anticipate, that members of the same church, soldiers in the same "sacramental host," who have on earth mingled their prayers in the same aspiration, and laid their sacrifices on the same altar, will, as they arrive one after another, wait at the pearly gates, and welcome each other in, as "the blessed of the Lord." What a meeting will that be, when each of us, having come up out of great tribulation, and "washed our robes and made them white in the blood

of the Lamb," we shall bow with the multitudes of the redeemed before the throne, see the Saviour as he is, and love Him as we ought! How delightful then to look back on all the way the Lord has led us, "to recount the labors of our feet," to stand surprised at the temptations we have escaped, to read the interpretation of dispensations that once frowned cheerless and mysterious upon us, to view the strength of the law as annihilated, and "the bitterness of death" as past, to look forward to the increasing glories of Messiah's reign, and adore and rejoice forever that we have been built up component parts of that eternal temple, which is even now rising, the admiration of other words, without the sound of "hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron."

With the thoughts of that meeting, which will take place before many years, with the bright prospects of that world which will soon stand disclosed to as many of us as are the followers of the Lamb, let us animate ourselves in the toilsome strife against sin. Let us weave a song of rejoicing in the house of our pilgrimage and the land of our exile. Meanwhile, dear brethren, if ye have esteemed me faithful in the Lord; if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, if I have ever administered a cup of cold water to the thirsting soul of a disciple, let me not perish from your remembrance, let me not be forgotten in your prayers, that I may "glorify God in the fire," and if it be His will that I come out of it, I may be a purified son of Levi, and be again promoted to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water in the service of Israel's God; and that in some humble measure I may bear resemblance to the picture an apostle drew of himself: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not for-

saken; cast down, but not destroyed,"—"approving ourselves as the ministers of God by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Finally, brethren, FAREWELL! Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. That your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the prayer of

Your affectionate pastor,

JOSEPH S. CHRISTMAS.

Danbury, (Conn.,) September, 1828.

The following is extracted from the "*Annals of the American Pulpit*," published in 1858.

FROM THE REV. HENRY WILKES, D.D.

Montreal, L. C., December 10, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: To note down some recollections of the gifted and now sainted Christmas, is a task affecting, yet pleasant. It is fitting that your forthcoming work should contain a sketch of the character and course of this young American clergyman, who, though early removed to his reward, was distinguished by no ordinary qualities, and was favored with more than usual success during his brief ministry. Lovely in his life, his memory is still fragrant after the lapse of eighteen years. One loves to recall his dignified and graceful mien, his blameless life, his powerful utterance of the truths of God, and his untiring, earnest consecration of all his faculties to the one object of his life—the glory of Christ in the salvation of souls. Most profitable is such an exercise of the memory, too often encumbered with things of little value. It is refreshing to dwell a while on one "who feared God above many," and who has left behind him a bright example of devotedness to Christ's cause.

A calm review, at this distance of time, gives rise to the conviction that his was a special mission to this Northern frontier of American Christendom,—designed to begin a work of spiritual amelioration, which, receiving then an impulse and an impression, has steadily advanced until this present, through various channels, and in quarters and by instruments then unlooked for. A quarter of a century has passed away since that mission was introduced, and

truly wonderful have been the results. As your space will not admit of enlargement on a merely collateral topic, it may suffice to notice that there were then only four Protestant places of worship in the city, and that the aggregate number of those who "loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," was lamentably small. There are now nearly twenty Protestant houses of prayer. In most of these there is an intelligent and earnest ministry, while the aggregate of those who "know the truth in the love of it," is large. It is not my purpose to trace the influence of the short ministry of my loved friend, as giving impulse and impress to this movement—*that* would be to write the history of religion in Montreal during the last twenty-five years; but the opinion may be recorded that He who orders all things well, and who knows the end from the beginning, has made use of that ministry in a very marked manner in the achievement of the progress, imperfect as it still is, over which we now rejoice.

Mr. Christmas was the first pastor of a small church formed of individuals who had been connected with a congregation, gathered by a clergyman from Scotland, belonging there to a dissenting Presbyterian Body, whose place of worship in Montreal had been erected chiefly by pecuniary aid from the United States. On the demise of that clergyman, a bare majority of the owners of pews determined to become identified with the Established Church of Scotland, and, as a consequence, the above mentioned persons—chiefly natives of the United States, seceded, and formed themselves into a Church and Society, having at length the corporate designation of "the American Presbyterian Church." This infant body had enjoyed the temporary services of several able young clergymen, but at

length received the pastoral laborsof the subject of this notice. Not personally identified at the time with the church, I have yet a distinct recollection of his first appearance in this sphere of labor, and of the attractiveness of his ministry, notwithstanding the absurd prejudice which then existed in the minds of English-speaking people generally against everything and everybody not of British origin. My impressions are of his personal gracefulness and manly beauty, as he appeared in the pulpit, attired in clerical vestments, as also of the finished style and forcible character of his discourses. Quite young, he was yet manifestly, "a scribe well instructed,"—a workman who "rightly divided the word of truth." His literary and theological advantages, which had been great, he had used to good purpose, so that he appeared on all occasions "thoroughly furnished."

The people of his immediate charge, not having yet completed the erection of their place of worship, were indebted to other congregations for the use of theirs, at hours during which they did not occupy them. This was in some respects a disadvantage in the work of organization; yet it had the effect of bringing the young minister to the notice of many, who might otherwise have never heard him. There were at the time scattered through the other churches, certain well-instructed and devout adherents of several of the Dissenting Churches in England and Scotland, of which there were no representatives here. There were Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians not of the Church of Scotland —men and women of intelligence and piety. Some of these were drawn around Mr. Christmas, because of sympathy with his doctrinal views, and with the forms of Divine worship adopted—as, for instance, the use of Dr.

Watts' Psalms and Hymns. Part of them united with the church, while others merely became identified with the congregation. With much that was excellent and effective, however, this was not the characteristic period of our friend's ministry. It was the Lord's purpose ere long to vouchsafe to him a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit.

You are doubtless informed from other sources of the fact that, after laboring a number of months, it became needful that he should visit the neighboring States, and his own native region, partly for the purpose of obtaining aid in the erection of the large place of worship in which he was to minister; and that, during this visit, he met the late Dr. Nettleton, and enjoyed the unspeakable advantage of beholding one of those wonderful works of grace by which the ministry of that remarkable man was at this period attended. During his absence, the little flock was much in prayer, while the Sabbath School was maintained with unwonted vigor. By uniting with that institution as a teacher, I became, at this time, connected with the congregation, and was also, I humbly hope, "found" by that Good Shepherd who seeketh and saveth the lost."

Unless I am greatly mistaken, Mr. Christmas returned to his charge under the influence of what might perhaps be denominated, not inappropriately, a second conversion. Truly has the German poet sung

"Earnestness is life."

And it has been recently well said by a Quarterly Reviewer, —"The acorn is a quiet little nut; but let it be nourished in the bosom of its mother earth, silently building up its massive trunk amid the passing generations of trees and of woodmen, and you behold the living oak that wrestles stoutly

with the storm. The lion's whelp, reposing in his lair, is a gentle creature; but give him time, and he will show you what is in him. The lightning sleeps in the thunder cloud, but when it tears its prison, how it scathes and blasts the works of nature and of man! How cold a thing is gunpowder, only let the *spark* touch it! Even so is it in the world of mind. Let a man's soul be quickened, called forth by some great principle, some grand ambition, and up to the measure of his strength, and according to the fashion of his inward thought, what deeds will he not do, for good or for evil, just because he is in earnest, believing strongly, and so acting out what he believes."* This "great principle," this "grand ambition," this master-passion, in Mr. Christmas, was henceforth the conversion of sinners, and the advancement of our Lord's Kingdom. Devout before, and devoted, he had served the Lord in a manner superior to many of his contemporaries; but now it was absorption: "this one thing I do" was his practical motto; and everything was subordinate to this great object. In him "earnestness was life," and a noble life did it prove. Would that such impulses quickened us all —how great then our effectiveness!

My impressions are distinct of the unwonted solemnity and power of his pulpit exercises. His preaching was doctrinal for purposes of instruction, and occasionally controversial for the important end of discrimination. He "chose acceptable words," and handled the weapons of this warfare with the skill of a master. I have sketches of many of his discourses taken down at the time: they bear the marks of adaptation to the existing wants of the peo-

* British Quarterly Review, No. XI., p. 244.

ple, as well as of much beauty and force. Usefulness is obviously the design according to which they were composed. Some of the practical appeals are remarkably pungent and searching; others are full of earnest tenderness. He understood the sentiment in its highest sense,—"Omnia vincit amor." And yet I recollect one or more instances of individuals becoming so infuriated by the scorching discrimination of some of his sermons, that, as confessed afterwards, temptation was felt to shoot the preacher. I do not remember ever leaving the house of prayer, with the inpressions, in some quarters so common, which suggest the remarks,—"that was a well written sermon"—"there was much originality of thought in that discourse"—"that minister's style is very chaste." No. It was all home work—the preacher was forgotten in the truth, and so earnest was he that people should hear and feel *that*, that he stood modestly behind it, not desirous of himself being noticed.

Yet his style was easy and graceful, and frequently of a high character. I think you will agree in the opinion that "Valedictory Admonitions,"—a pamphlet of thirty-six pages, octavo, is beautifully and vigorously written, and, so far as I recollect, such was his accustomed style. Many of his discourses were written fully out, but he never read them in the pulpit. He appeared there usually, and I think uniformly, without notes. His delivery was chaste and very solemn; but too unimpassioned for the higher flights of oratory. His public prayers were quite remarkable for scriptural phrases happily introduced, as also for fervor and solemnity. I never heard him use a coarse, or familiar, or slang expression in prayer. My impression is that he frequently composed prayers in order to improvement in this part of public worship. Occasionally, after the intro-

ductory devotional exercises, he would pronounce the text of his discourse, and then pause, saying—" Christians, I am about to address the unconcerned (or some other class) from these words, it will be in vain without the Divine blessing—let us spend a minute in united, silent prayer." That minute or two of stillness, only here and there broken by the sigh of the earnest petitioners, was an effecting preparative for a discourse full of " Christ and Him crucified." Truly did he say in "Valedictory Admonitions,"—" During four years, I have testified to you the Gospel of the grace of God. I have sedulously avoided all curious questions, doubtful disputations, and every subject whose radiations do not branch into the very heart of Christianity. The Heart-searcher is witness that I have been anxious to engrave such truths upon your mind, as it were worthy an immortal spirit to bear recorded on the tablets of the heart, and such as I knew must one day be exhibited as evidence of what was written on my own." " When I think that perhaps a little more painstaking on my part, a little more travail of the heart in prayer, a little more labor of the intellect in the presentation of motives, a little more toil of the body in following you with entreaties of solicitude to your dwellings, might possibly have saved some one, I feel that there may be a propriety in adopting the Psalmist's petition,—'*Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.*'" What earnestness!

His character was simple, childlike, spotless. He knew comparatively little of the world—occasionally this was a disadvantage in the midst of a mixed and busy population like ours. Still, whatever observers or opponents may have said of his enthusiasm, or even of his fanaticism, they could not question the sincerity and consistency of his

godliness. Into the details of the blessed revivals of religion which occurred here and in the neighboring town of St. Andrews, your limits will not permit me to enter. But it may be noted with respect to his own course, that while he labored untiringly and to exhaustion, he also found employment for others. Christians were instructed in their responsibility as stewards, and they were earnestly enjoined to be faithful. Although a personal matter, it may not be without interest for me to state that, having united with the church some months after Mr. C.'s return from the visit to the United States, above alluded to, he ere long kindly but solemnly called my attention to the Christian ministry. He was only two years my senior, but I well recollect the impression his appeal produced upon my mind. At the time I did not yield, having doubts as to the matter of duty. It may be well to state, however, for the purpose of exciting others to "go and do likewise," that he was authorized by a gentleman in Philadelphia, of whose name I was then and still remain ignorant, to offer me the needful pecuniary advances in the way of loan or otherwise. At the time I was just entering into new commercial relations. But the suggestion of my beloved friend never left me; the path of duty gradually opened to my own mind; and, having acquired sufficient pecuniary means in business to pay my own expenses through a course of study, Mr. Christmas had the gratification of seeing me abandon profitable commercial engagements for that higher work to which he had been the first to direct my attention. You will pardon this allusion to a personal affair—it is made in order to illustrate the fact that the subject of this notice endeavored to press all into that department of the Lord's service, for which he supposed them respectively qualified.

I have already exceeded your limits, and must not extend my remarks. It is now more than twenty years since we parted, to meet no more, until the Father's house is opened not for one only, but, if it may be, through grace, for both. He, prostrated in health, and compelled to relinquish his charge, was on the eve of returning to his native South—I, on the eve of sailing to my native east on the other side the Atlantic, there to pursue literary and theological studies. In two years more, after laying his lovely babes and his admirable wife in the grave, this gifted, useful servant of Christ was called home to his rest and reward. But he lived much and long in a short time, if life is to be measured by effective service. Some of us would joyously hail the comforting assurance, could we know that as much hath been done for Christ's glory in the salvation of men, during a ministry of three or four times the length of his, as he was honored to achieve in a very few years. The Lord make us faithful; and the results may be safely left with Him.

Believe me, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

HENRY WILKES.

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